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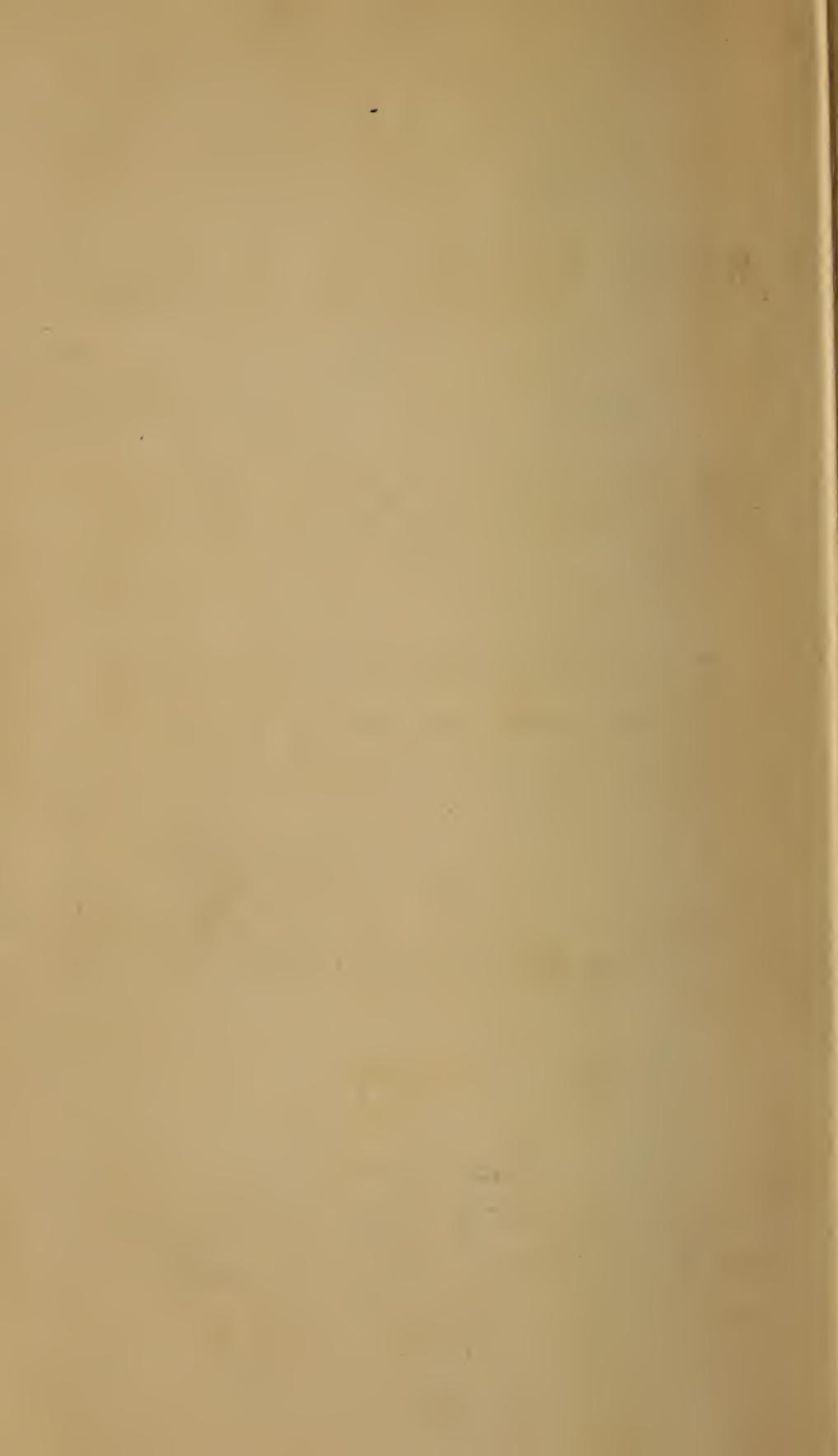
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A

MODEL FOR MEN OF BUSINESS:

OR,

THE CHRISTIAN LAYMAN CONTEMPLATED AMONG
HIS SECULAR OCCUPATIONS.

REVISED AND MODIFIED FROM THE LECTURES OF

REV. HUGH STOWELL, M. A.,
INCUMBENT OF CHRIST CHURCH, SALFORD.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION,

BY REV. DANIEL CURRY.

5399.

New-York:

PUBLISHED BY CARLTON & PHILLIPS,
FOR THE TRACT SOCIETY OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH,
200 MULBERRY-STREET.

1855.

BV4596

B8S73

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1855,

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P R E F A C E.

A WORK of the character of that herewith submitted to the public has long been felt to be a desideratum in our religious literature. Almost every other department of duty has been thoroughly and frequently discussed, and the Christian's walk, in most other relations of life, than those of business, has often been held up to serious consideration. But the interested inquirer has long sought in vain for a treatise examining the relations of secular business to Christian character and influence. To meet this want this volume is now given to the public.

The work was originally prepared and published by Rev. Hugh Stowell, of Manchester, in the form of lectures on the life and character of Nehemiah. These lectures were at first delivered from the pulpit by their reverend author, and afterward printed in their original form. But in preparing the work for the American public it was judged best to change its form from that of a series of public addresses to a plain and continuous treatise. In doing this, whatever related specially to the history of its hero was omitted, and many expressions modified into a

conformity with the changed character of the work. This, however, has been done as sparingly as possible, so that the work as now presented is really the same in substance that originally came from the hands of the preacher.

Some few unimportant changes and omissions were found necessary to adapt it to American readers. Of these the most considerable is in the twelfth chapter, which originally consisted for the most part of a plea for the national Church of England, a subject in which the religious public of this country can have only a remote interest. This is, therefore, omitted as unsuitable, and its place supplied with more appropriate matter.

The work is now sent forth in its new form, with the earnest and devout hope that it may prove a stimulus to the practical piety of many of that large and interesting class for whom it is especially designed. And if these shall be its results, its ulterior and remote consequences cannot fail to be eminently beneficial to the Church and the world. That such may be the effects has been the hope, and is still the prayer of

THE EDITOR.

NEW-YORK, Dec., 1854.

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INTRODUCTION.

“YE are the salt of the earth,” is the declaration of the Saviour to his people. These simple and brief words serve, to a very large degree, to define the relations of the members of the redeemed Church to the world out of which they have been called. The Church and the world are contradistinguished. They are not the same body, nor is that a part or portion of this.

“They are not of the world,” is the language of the same blessed Saviour relative to the same persons. They are called to “come out from the world and be separate.” But it is evident that the intended separation is one of spirit and character rather than of personal association, since he elsewhere says, “I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.”

Such is the purpose of the great Head of the Church, such the mission that he has as-

signed to his followers on earth;—to be *in* the world and yet not *of* the world, and by their contact with the corrupting mass of depraved humanity to save it from coming ruin.

Among the practical heresies introduced by the great Apostacy into the outward Church, is that which makes the Church consist virtually of only the ministers of religion. By this the people are reduced to merely passive recipients of the Church's favor, with no duties but submission and obedience, and no responsibilities to their fellow-men for the exercise of their personal influence. By this is the application of the words first quoted restricted to certain official characters, and the work of diffusing the savor of the gospel assigned to a class or profession, rather than devolved on the whole body.

Among the happy results of the great Reformation is to be reckoned, as not the least, the restoration of the original design of the Saviour in this particular. As, on the one hand, the specially ordained ministers of religion are no longer looked to as possessing sacerdotal powers and prerogatives, so, on the other, the whole family of the faithful are recognized as “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people.” There

is a perfect harmony among the members of Christ's mystical body: each has its own functions, and all coöperate to promote the glory of their common Head. The Church is itself a body of believers: the same spirit actuates each, and from each proceeds a portion of that genial influence by virtue of which the world is constantly made better.

In dispensing the gifts of his gospel, the Author of grace identifies himself with the Father of our spirits. The provisions and demands of our holy religion all recognize man's original character—the constitution of his mental being. Man's individuality is never for a moment lost sight of. He acts for himself, and is individually responsible for his actions, and to his own Master he stands or falls. But without any detriment to his individuality, he is also recognized as a social being, intimately and inseparably united to all about him, and by virtue of this union he exerts a determining influence upon all within the sphere of his action. Whatever he is, he is not for himself alone, but for others also. His loves and hates, his prepossessions and aversions,—the sentiments of his heart, the tendencies of his desires, and the purposes of his will, are all felt beyond himself, actuating and inclining other

minds in the same direction. He that *is* good, from the necessities of the case will *do* good,—will exercise a holy and sanctifying influence over those with whom he is in any way associated. So, also, no mask of sanctity that conceals the deformities of a corrupt heart can neutralize the tendency of such a one to corrupt others. “A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.” The rule has no exception; a man’s influence among his fellows is agreeable to his real moral character. In this particular there can be no successful hypocrisy. It is not the design or wish of the individual that determines in this matter: though his better judgment may incline him to deprecate the influence of his own example, his character rather than his wishes will assuredly govern.

No other consideration can so effectually demonstrate to every man his responsibilities as this. With what a tremendous power has God armed every individual! and what fearful responsibilities has he devolved on every one,—responsibilities for others as well as for himself! None but a stranger to himself and his own relations can ask, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” Verily every man is his brother’s keeper,—made so by God

himself when he surrounded the individual with an atmosphere of secret power, and constituted him a magnet in the world of intelligence and sensibility. And in this way God intends that the Church shall save the world. The fire that Christ came to kindle has its focus in the regenerated spirit, whence it diffuses its light and warmth to all around.

A converted soul, is a candle not under a bushel but on a candle-stick, giving light to all in the room. The concourse of redeemed souls in the congregation of the faithful intensifies this light and heat, but still its fountain is in the individual soul. Holy men constitute holy Churches, and from the assembly of the pious godly influences must go forth. The aggregate of this influence is made up from the contributions of each and all. The most obscure, as well as the most conspicuous, brings his part, and often in a degree of which he is himself the least aware. The clergy do not constitute the Church, nor is the Church's influence determined by the decrees of synods, and the decisions of councils; but every man, each in his sphere, is an integral portion of that mysterious whole, having his own powers and responsibilities.

There is cause to suspect, that by neglecting to consider these things, not a few well-disposed persons have failed to recognize the claims that are justly laid upon them. Especially do laymen and devout persons, whose duties call them into daily contact with the world, fail to perceive that this is the mission assigned them by the Saviour,—that they are sent there to preach Christ in the silent influences of a godly example, and in all the varied opportunities of social intercourse. In no other way can the savor of the gospel be so thoroughly diffused through society. Secular engagements often bring the Christian into places where the professional minister of religion could not gain access, and opportunities of silent and undiscovered religious persuasion are thus afforded. This is, doubtless, the order of Providence. Every Christian should bear in mind that the great business of his life, as a child of grace and an heir of salvation, is to glorify God, and to do good by enlarging the light and influence of the gospel in the world. For this purpose the Head of the Church has called some to the special work of the Christian ministry; while to others, by the same authority, is committed the less conspicuous, but

surely not the less honorable or important duty of preaching Christ among the various associations and relations of social life. Every real Christian is a promoter of Christianity; and it certainly is not beyond the bounds of a sober and rational faith to believe that our positions in life are assigned us by the All-wise One with special reference to this, our special duty. Our varied relations all become to us occasions of influence over those to whom they unite us. There are certain influences which pertain specially to the relations of inferiority,—to poverty, subordination, and dependence; and hence some of God's dear children are placed in these relations, that through them they may be made a savor of life to those about them. Other relations bring with them another class of influences, and therefore they too are committed to some of the family of the faithful, that the whole tissue of the social system may be subjected to the sanctifying influence of the gospel.

It should, however, be remembered, that in this matter of personal and social influence, though it is to a great degree spontaneous and necessary, yet it is also to a large extent subject to our own volition and efforts. It is a talent committed to each

one to be used by the receiver to the glory of the Great Giver. As taught by Christ, the distribution is unequal—even with a disparity as wide as the proportion of one, five, and ten. But it is required of a man according to what is given,—responsibilities are graduated according to opportunities. But the talents committed to one may be buried, and not used. True, as already remarked, a man's influence will partake of the character that he possesses. But the *degree* of that influence may be greatly varied by causes over which he has a deciding influence. The light under a bushel is as truly a light as when brought out to act against the surrounding darkness, but its effects are not the same. So there is cause to fear there may be many muffled luminaries in this dark world,—much concealed light, for want of which multitudes continually go astray. Salt is always good, always tends to save; and yet it may lie inactive, and ineffective of good in the midst of putrefaction and decay. Unless brought into *contact* with that which it is designed to purify and preserve, notwithstanding its inherent properties, it must be quite ineffectual.

The great want of the world at this time

is a stronger and more copious infusion of the spirit of Christianity into the common affairs of life. The elementary power by which the world is to be saved is already committed to our hands ; it needs now to be brought to act directly upon its objects. We do not in any sense disparage the great agencies by which the Church has hitherto operated,—the ministry, the Sabbath, and the ordinances of the sanctuary. But these, though the most eminent, and therefore the most conspicuous, are not all ; nor are they in some aspects of the case so great and effective as certain others. The work of the ministry occupies one of a hundred Christians ; but the Lord has need of all in diffusing the doctrines and influences of religion. The Sabbath occurs but once in seven days ; but personal intercourse among men is perpetually operative for good or evil. The ordinances of God's house are only occasional, and often to many inaccessible ; but no member of the social body lives beyond the social influences which pervade that body. Could all real Christians be fully convinced that to themselves individually are committed the gifts of the grace of life, not solely as an individual endowment, but also and especially as a sacred deposit for

the benefit of others, and that the reckoning of the great day of accounts would refer especially to the use made of this sacred trust, we cannot doubt that there would result a corresponding quickening of their energies, alike beneficial to themselves and the world. Did Christians properly realize that they, in their several spheres, are each called to labor for the diffusion of the truth,—that to them is a dispensation of the gospel committed,—and that so far as they neglect the duty thus imposed must sin and ruin pervade the world, we are certain that they would awake and address themselves to their holy calling, till society in all its ramifications should feel and confess the power of an awakened religious consciousness in the Church.

Nor is the work which pertains especially to the laity of the Church one altogether obscure and unillustrious. To the Christian with whom his religion is manifestly the unselfish devotion of the soul, who gains no wealth by the craft, and who adheres to his profession of the faith quite irrespective of all professional influence or prejudices,—to such a one is given the opportunity to convince the gainsayers, and to disarm prejudices, that cannot be enjoyed by one who,

in the eyes of the world, seems to have less unselfish motives in the matter. The disadvantages of the minister in this particular are perhaps necessarily incident to his position. They are, however, not the less really disadvantages; and the attitude of the Church would be much less advantageous, were it not for the example of the unquestionably disinterested devotion of non-professional piety exhibited by our laity. There is a power in the steady maintenance of Christian principle—in the earnest devotion of the life to Christian duty from the love of these things—which always awakens the admiration of the beholders. Among the greatest exhibitions of moral sublimity made by vitalized Christianity in the world, few can equal that of the good man occupied in his daily duties, “using the world as not abusing it,”—*in* the world and yet not *of* the world,—breathing its tainted atmosphere, but not corrupted by it,—walking among its pollutions, yet having his garment undefiled. Such was Enoch, who walked with God, and was also the father of a family, and occupied his place in the social body: such was Abraham, the friend of God, who was a prince among the people: such was David, the king of Israel, and the sweet

psalmist of Zion: such was Nehemiah, a prince and ruler, whose zeal for his God is recorded as an illustrious example for the imitation of Christian magistrates and laymen generally: such was Joseph of Arimathaea, at once the burier of the outcast and crucified Saviour, and a member of the great council of the Jewish nation: and such was Cornelius, whose prayers and alms came up as a memorial before heaven while yet he was at the head of his battalion, and discharging the duties of his position. In every age and place the Church has presented its examples of unselfish devotion, by which it has been made the light of the world and the salt of the earth. Its triumphs have been achieved through this agency as well as by that of the specially appointed dispensers of the word and doctrine of the gospel. These two agencies are equally of divine appointment; they are complementary to each other, so that in the economy of grace both are alike necessary to the completeness and efficiency of the gospel.

The times demand especially the application of Christian principles to mercantile affairs, both to fix and enforce the claims of mercantile morality, and to bring the claims of Christianity to act directly upon the con-

sciences of Christian merchants and men of business. The increased facilities for successful business pursuits now afforded are drawing increased numbers of professed Christians into the whirling and eddying tide of commerce. If by this new dangers are incurred by those thus occupied, there are also afforded new facilities for doing good by displaying in a new light the excellence of the gospel. As the disciples of the lowly Saviour are now found in the exchange, in the marts of trade, and in all places “where merchants most do congregate,” so should Christ be there glorified in the super-excellence of their probity, courtesy, and unsullied integrity. Nor should the power arising from such association be left wholly to its own private action. Let Christ be confessed in the manifestation of his grace in the lives of his disciples;—let a godless world be taught that the rectified and elevated morality which is confessed and admired in the Christian man of business is the fruit of piety, and the result of the precepts and spirit of Christianity in the hearts of its subjects;—let him who has been cleansed not fail to return to give glory to Him who wrought the cure;—let him whose eyes have been opened always confess the power and

the person of Him whose power brought to him such blessing;—let the Christian every-where maintain his Christian profession, always remembering that he may not safely venture where his profession would be incongruous to his position and occupations.

The quickened activities of the age require corresponding energy and devotedness in the duties of Christianity. He who crowds years into months, and compasses in a lifetime the work of a generation, cannot be an inactive Christian. If he serve God at all, he must serve him earnestly, devotedly, and to effect. His quickened powers must be consecrated to his divine Master in good works. The gold that perishes, the object of his daily thoughts and efforts, must be consecrated to Christ, lest it eat out his soul, and reduce him to the state of an idolater. Engaged from day to day in gaining the unrighteous mammon, he must be careful to make for himself friends of the mammon of unrighteousness.

Impressed with these convictions, we gladly avail ourselves of the opportunity of presenting to the reader the following pages, earnestly commending them to his prayerful consideration, confident that great good will result from their perusal.

A MODEL FOR MEN OF BUSINESS.

CHAPTER I.

THE RULING PRINCIPLE.

THE religion of the Bible is not a sickly plant, which requires the forcing-house to keep it alive: it is a hardy tree, which flourishes best in the open field. The servant of God anywhere, is the servant of God everywhere. Few notions have done more mischief than the imagination that godliness belongs to the closet and the sanctuary, the cloister and the cell; that it is a thing of sabbaths and sacraments, of forms and creeds; that it is too ethereal to be interfused into the occupations of secular life. How fond the fancy! For what a man *is* in his counting-house or on the exchange, in the midst of his mercantile pursuits, *that* he is in the house of prayer, in the closet of devotion, in the sight of Him who will judge him at the last day.

How unscriptural, therefore, the sentiment, so current in the world: "Religion is well in its place, but has nothing to do with the warehouse or the workshop, with the senate or the cabinet!" On the same false assumption, many men of business will affirm that it is impossible to carry out the principles of the gospel in the details of commercial life. They look upon religion as a garment which may be put on and off as occasion requires, not as the divine weft on which the whole warp of character is to be woven.

To refute such fallacies, and dispel such illusions, there is no more effectual means than the holy example of God's favored servants, as given to us in the sacred pages. That example shows what can be done, and at the same time points out the way in which it may be accomplished. It teaches while it stimulates, and while it encourages it directs. Example, too, that it may be effective must be pertinent,—it must come home to the consciences and the circumstances of those whom it is to influence. For this reason the examples which the Holy Scriptures exhibit are peculiarly appropriate, and by their variety they afford lessons of instruction and encouragement to men in all the varied circumstances of life. Especially

do those simple but striking biographical sketches teach us the social and private virtues of those eminent servants of God.

Though Enoch "walked with God," and would seem to have had his conversation in heaven while he yet remained on earth, yet is he named among the fathers of the people, and presented to our contemplation as a man who performed his part in the duties of life.

Noah, the preacher of righteousness, was at once a man of his times and a man of God. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Abimelech and Melchizedek, were not the less eminent in their piety because they were men of large business relations. Joseph's piety was as thorough and as fervent when "the Lord had made him ruler over all Egypt," as when he abode in his father's tent, or served as a slave or a prisoner. In the history of Moses, of David, of Elisha, and of Daniel, we see exhibitions of the power of true godliness to flourish alike in private and in public life. But perhaps the most pertinent, though somewhat less celebrated, example for the man of business, is afforded in the case of Nehemiah, the son of Hachaliah, one of the children of the captivity in Babylon. In his early life elevated by the

providence of God to an office of high trust and distinction in the service of the king of Assyria, being appointed his cup-bearer, and thus surrounded by the seductions, and in contact with the defilements, of an idolatrous court; afterward led of God to repair to Jerusalem, for the purpose of rousing and succoring the remnant of his people to restore the desolated walls of the holy city; subsequently occupied in governing and establishing those whom he had rallied and organized; at one time harassed by insidious and insulting foes, at another embarrassed by the misconduct of his own subjects; now redressing grievances, now rectifying abuses—through all, and in all, he still demeaned himself as became a child of the Most High, and “served his own generation according to the will of God.” Bearing adversity with fortitude, and prosperity with soberness, he manifested how a man may embellish with the beauty of holiness every situation in life, and pass through the vicissitudes of his career so as to be true to his principles and faithful in his stewardship.

Motives make the man. What the mainspring is to a piece of mechanism, that the master principle is to the life. What you are in your heart toward God, that you are

in your character toward man, as estimated by Him with whom we have to do. If the eye be single, the whole body will be full of light; but if the eye be evil, the whole body will be full of darkness. The vital question in character, therefore, is, What is the inner man? If that be wrong, it vitiates the whole; if that be right, God will have respect unto his servant, even though there should be much of error in judgment, and of infirmity in conduct. The intention is the action, the principle, the practice, in the eyes of Him who "desireth truth in the inward parts."

It is not sufficient, therefore, that the outward actions should be such as one may commend: the motive that dictates the action must be right and pure, and duly elevated. In the review of life, the servant of God will ever find that the portions of his career upon which he looks with the greatest satisfaction are just those in which he was actuated by a pious reference to the will of God in all that he did. The action itself does not sufficiently determine this; the motive alone fixes their moral character, and that motive must be "the fear of the Lord." He indeed might say that he acted thus because of the promptings of generos-

ity; or because of a high sense of honor; or because of the patriotism which fired his breast; or because of the compassion which melted his heart." But had any one of these been the commanding motive of his behavior, though his actions would have been the same, their moral quality would have been utterly changed. They would at once have been lowered into mere manifestations of natural virtue—flowers of the desert instead of flowers of Paradise—wild olive-berries, fair to the sight but sour to the taste, instead of fruits of grace from the tree of life. A pious deference to the fear of God alone gave the character of godliness to his conduct; this transmuted what would have been no better than fair tinsel into the fine gold of the sanctuary. The flesh can exhibit the former, the Spirit alone can create the latter.

The fear of God in the Old Testament is equivalent to the love of God in the New. There is, indeed, little distinction between the expressions; yet if the general use of the former under the old, and of the latter under the new dispensation, has any special significance, it indicates the severe aspect of the one economy as compared with the more gracious aspect of the other. The

saint of the Old Testament had more of awe, the saint of the New Testament has more of confidence, in the service of God. This confidence, however, is chastened by reverence; while that awe was softened by affection. The one, no less than the other, is the gift of grace. Both are the fruit of promise. "I will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall not depart from me," is the tenor of the ancient covenant. Utterly apart is this fear from that servile dread which sometimes scares and goads the wicked, or that terror, ending in despair, which worketh death. It is a filial fear, springing out of attachment, not aversion; a fear which has in it the comfort of the Holy Ghost; a fear which grows out of faith, justifying faith, in Christ Jesus; a fear ever accompanied with a secret satisfaction, an ennobling sense of liberty; a fear which disenthralts the mind from the bondage of other masters, by making it true to the one sole Master whose service is perfect freedom. What viewed in one light is love, viewed in another is godly fear. Love constrains—fear restrains. They are but different aspects of the same principle. If there be genuine love of God, there cannot fail to be a holy fear of offending him. This fear of the Lord

is therefore “the beginning of wisdom,” the guardian of holiness, the seal of adoption.

Would that the power of this principle pervaded the mercantile world ! How mighty would be its working ! How much is it needed ! Examine the morals of that world in the light of Scripture ; and, even in our own distinguished land, they will be found fearfully faulty. True, there is much that is honorable and of good report among our merchant princes ; true, our country contrasts favorably in its commercial character with other lands, and marvelous is the amount of property consigned to our gigantic traffickers, simply on the strength of their honor and integrity ; yet, if you penetrate into the recesses of commerce, you frequently detect a low and shifting standard of equity—you discover that a thousand practices are connived at, and pass current in business, which, when weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, are found utterly wanting.

Taking the morality of the commercial world at the highest, how much of it is genuine ? What amount of fear of God enters into its composition ? If men are upright in their dealings merely because they have a selfish conviction that honesty

is the best policy, and that fairness will answer better than fraud; or if they act justly simply from a sense of honor, from a pride which raises them above being guilty of a low and disgraceful transaction; or if, to ascend higher in the scale of unrenewed virtue, they do right because they instinctively recoil from all that is base and equivocal, from whatever would degrade and disturb their mind; then all their imposing array of mercantile virtues, however lovely in the eyes of men, who can look only at the outward appearance, however meriting the meed of human admiration and praise, are, after all, of the earth, earthy, hollow at the core, unprofitable in the sight of God. The stamp of such coin is the stamp of the world; the stamp on the coin which will be current in heaven, is the image and superscription of the King of kings. However, therefore, our merchants may plume themselves on their mercantile character, their punctuality in their promises, and their exactitude in their engagements; yet if, in all this, they are only offering sacrifice to self as their idol; if their highest aim is to maintain their own unblemished reputation, or their own uncompromised self-respect; and if, in all, they have no eye to

the record on high, to their Master in heaven, then it must be said of them, in the face of all their excellence, and notwithstanding their name and fame among their fellows, that they *have* their reward; that in the sight of God they are no better than painted sepulchers, or trees whose fruits, while fair to look upon, only need to be grasped, in order that, like the fabled apples of Sodom, they may be crushed to ashes. Of their virtues, as of the offerings of Israel in ancient times, God may indignantly ask, “Did ye them at all unto me, even unto me?”

Tried by this touchstone, the morality of many who stand highest in the commercial world would prove but shining dross; and if they are buoying themselves up with the notion that what man has approved God will not condemn, how frightful the disappointment, how crushing the confusion, which must await them in the day “when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed!” Yet “why, even of themselves, do they not judge that which is right?” for they cannot deny that what is not done unto God must be done unto some other master; and that such other master must be an idol and usurper, because he occupies the tem-

ple and the throne of their Creator and Redeemer. What, then, are their secular virtues but splendid idolatries, specious acts of disloyalty to God? Do not these very men condemn themselves? Do they not betray the partiality and earthliness of their morality? For while they are so scrupulous about defrauding men, how unscrupulously will they rob God—rob him of the devotions of the closet, rob him of the services of the Sabbath, rob him of the ordinances of the sanctuary, rob him of the homage of the heart? They “render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s,” while they withhold from “God the things that are God’s.” Their very religion is human. “Their fear toward God is taught by the precept of man.” They try to keep the commandments of the second table of the law, so far as the letter goes; but neither in the letter nor in the spirit do they attempt to keep the commandments of the first. Thus, by their conduct, they show that they look upon the duties which relate directly to God as far less binding than those which relate more immediately to man; and that they conceive that, while they would incur heavy blame by violating the former, they may with impunity set the latter at naught. Can such *ungodly*

morality be mistaken for holiness? Can it be imagined that faithfulness toward man will be accepted as a substitute for loyalty toward God? Is it to be endured that men should recognize the claims of justice, of gratitude, and of fidelity toward their fellows, yet turn a deaf ear and a faithless heart toward the claims of their Creator, Preserver, Redeemer, and Judge? The very fact that they thus acknowledge human ties, while they disregard those which are divine, serves to make their guilt the more palpable, if it will not serve to enhance their condemnation. How much, therefore, is it to be feared, that many who stand high in credit and confidence here, will hereafter be overwhelmed with shame when they see the books opened, and find when too late that they are bankrupt for eternity! What will they answer when God rises to judgment—what will they say when He shall arraign them!

As it is the fear of God alone which can impart to mercantile morality intrinsic worth, so it is that principle only that can insure to it strength, stability, and universality. Even the virtuous qualities which exalt a man in the commercial world, must lack reality and consistency when they rest on a lower ground. Hence, it is no uncom-

mon thing to find a man who was at one period distinguished for his honor and integrity, at another period of his life making utter shipwreck of character. While his bark glided along in smooth water, and his sails were filled with prosperous gales, he steered an undeviating course; but when storms arose, and surges swelled, and his vessel drifted amid quicksands and shallows, he soon abandoned the compass of honesty, and yielded himself to the force of the current. Men are astonished at the change. There is little need for astonishment. His rectitude was the creature of circumstance; sustained by success, with success it fell. In truth, the man is not greatly altered; his altered condition has called out what was latent in his breast. Fragile at best are the virtues which spring from the unregenerated heart.

Whatever the moral excellences which adorned a man before the fear of God was implanted in his breast, that fear will give them a reality and a worth which nothing else can give them. What was done at random, from mere impulse or to serve some temporary purpose, will then be done from principle, on system, and with the noblest end in view. Whatsoever things he did

aforetime that were lovely and of good report, will not only be still done, but done far more effectually than before, because they will be done from his heart ; his outward conduct will be the reflection of his inward nature. But, above all, the matchless energy of this principle will exert a strength and universality of influence which nothing else can command. God being everywhere, the man who fears him will fear him everywhere. With holy awe he will exclaim, “ O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine up-rising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.” Can he then forget, that there is an Eye which always discerns every feeling as well as every act, and an Ear which ever hearkens to the unspoken thought ? Such faith will constrain him to “ be in the fear of the Lord all the day long ; ” and so, whether he eats or drinks, or whatsoever he does, to do all to the glory of God. Indeed it is impossible to delineate fully the breadth and expansiveness of this principle of action. It will go with a man into the little as well as into the great, into the

hidden as well as into the open ; it will tell upon him, with equal force, whether others dissent from or concur in his course of conduct ; whether he swim with the stream or breast the current. It will elevate him to freedom and independence of character as simple as it is sublime ; he will no longer resemble the sun-dial, useless save in the light ; he will be like the time-piece, which keeps the tenor of its way alike in the shade as in the sunshine. How calmly can he look down upon the trifles which toss to and fro, agitate or transport, the vassals of the world,—the “men of the world, who have their portion in this world,” who are carried about by its currents, as straws are whirled in the eddies of the stream down which they are borne ! It is not so with him who is actuated by the fear of God. His helm is ever set for one point, his prow ever turned toward the haven of salvation. Instead of many masters, one is his master. Instead of many desires, one is his aim. He may fluctuate through infirmity ; sinister influences may for a season distract him ; but the ruling principle will still abide. So the needle, shaken by the vibrations of the vessel, may oscillate for a time ; yet, true to its magnetic property, will it still tremblingly turn to the pole. The

saint, like the sunflower, owns the center of attraction, when clouded as well as when clear.

How salutary and how separative the restraining power of this principle ! How will it keep a man undefiled amid the defilements of public life, like the pure stream that is said to pass through the salt lake, and yet retain its freshness ! Young men, just launching forth into the perils of the mercantile world, here is your safeguard. You will find much in the tone, the spirit, and the practices of business which will at first startle and distress you ; you will shrink from many of the expedients, manœuvres, and subterfuges of trade. But there will be great danger lest you should become familiarized with such things—lest they should benumb the tenderness of your conscience, and lower your standard of moral judgment. You will be tempted to think that you must do as others do or you cannot succeed ; that to be a clever man of business you must not be too nice and scrupulous ; and that, if you only fall in with the usages of the establishment in which you are employed, the responsibility rests with the principal rather than with the servant. You will be tempted to argue, If my employer bid, or at least

prompt me to misrepresent and equivocate in his service—if he wish me to beat down the seller and overcharge the buyer—to take advantage of the weak and the poor because of *his* strength and capital, and of *their* poverty and weakness—must I not obey him? Will the fault be mine—must I not succumb to his authority? No, young man, you have a master in heaven; “let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread!” “How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” exclaimed the Hebrew youth of old, when sin, clothed in the specious guise of authority, would have seduced him. Be your watchword the same. Fear, that you may not fear. Fear God that you may not fear man. Be it your resolve—whatever doubtful things others may do, even some who stand high on ‘Change, yea even some who pass for professors of godliness—“yet so will not I do, because of the fear of God.” No human name can endorse what God has dishonored—no human authority make that right which he has pronounced to be wrong. “What saith the Lord?”—not “What saith the world?” is the decisive question.

Mark the efficacy of the same principle in fortifying against temptation in another form. There are few things about which a com-

mercial man is so sensitive as his reputation for tact and sagacity ; but he will find that to take advantage of others, if only it be done cleverly and without detection, is deemed by many a mark of skill and shrewdness. To the life did the Holy Ghost portray the spirit of the present day, when he thus portrayed the spirit of ancient times—“ It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer : but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth.” How often do our buyers strive to cheapen the articles for which they treat beyond what they know to be fair, and, when they have succeeded, they straightway congratulate themselves, and boast of their superior business talent ! Nor will the world disallow their boasting. They will probably win a name for dexterity and cleverness in trade ; their services will command a high price in the market ; and, as for their integrity, it will be esteemed as of secondary importance to their talent. They can get on ; they can make a good bargain—that is the cardinal point. Here, therefore, is an ordeal for a godly tradesman. To be reputed soft and behind the age, because he dare not overreach his neighbor, will tend to stagger his pride and test his principle. He must endure to be accounted a fool, and to be

pited as too scrupulous for success. He must esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of earth. When he sees competitors prospering by doubtful expedients, or hears them glorying in their equivocal gains, his reflection and his joy will be—"So did not I, because of the fear of God."

As from the unrighteous expedients, so from the unhallowed indulgences of the child of this world will the fear of God restrain the child of light. He will not ask what is pleasant, what is customary, what is fashionable—but what is right. He is constrained to come out from the course of this world, and to be separate, that he may not touch the unclean thing. His ambition is to be one of the "peculiar people," who are "zealous of good works." Peculiarity is essential to Christianity; not an affected peculiarity, not the visor which designing men put on for the purpose of deceiving—but that honest, artless peculiarity, which springs from fearing God rather than man. Alas! that this should be *peculiar*, even in the so-called Christian world.

Therefore, O men of God, "if sinners entice you, consent ye not." "Choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God,

than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." You may be branded as unsocial, puritanical, precise; but in reply to all such charges, suffice it for you to answer, "So dare not, and so do not I, because of the fear of God."

No less cogent will be the influence of this motive in guarding you against desecration or profanation of the ordinances of the day of God. Worldly people think that if they frequent the sanctuary in the morning, the rest of the Sabbath may be spent in sloth, recreation, or business. The newspaper or the ledger, the feast or the excursion, occupies the principal portion of the day. Yea, and the very courts of the Lord's house are defiled by their buying and selling, in thought and desire; for their heart goeth after their covetousness, while their knees are bent in worship. Here, again, Divine fear will be to you as a wall of fire, to set you apart from the course of this world; you will abide faithful amid the faithless, scrupulous amid the licentious, devout amid the irreverent—"because of the fear of God."

Glorious liberty of the sons of God! Free to do everything but sin, they are therefore free indeed! Bound by one silken tie, they

are disengaged from a thousand chains. He is the freeman, who is free to serve God. He is the slave, who is not at liberty to serve Him whose service is perfect freedom. There is a yoke in that service, but it is easy — a burden, but it is light. “His commandments are not grievous; his ways are ways of pleasantness.” He is a master full of grace, full of pity, full of tenderness. He never forsakes those who fear him. “He pitied them as a father pitied his children.” “He spareth them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.” He will give them the first-fruits of heaven. “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.” “Walking in the fear of God, they walk in the comfort of the Holy Ghost.” Their fear hath no torment, and their submission no servility.

Such and so excellent is the master principle which controls and actuates the servant of God. We shall trace its mighty working again and again, as we proceed with the illustration of his character. In the career of the faithful, it is seen now emboldening him for conflict; now stimulating him to duty; now restraining him from temptation; now upholding him under difficulties; now humbling him to the dust; now lifting him

above “the fear of man, which bringeth a snare.”

Let every one, therefore, as he values his Christian integrity and consistency of character, examine his own heart, and see if this sovereign motive is reigning there. Too many will find it hard to discover what holds the supremacy within them. So manifold, capricious, and conflicting are the impulses which sway them, that they resemble the reed shaken with the wind, or the seaweed torn from the rock and tossed to and fro on the weltering waves of the ocean. One thing, at least, is clear, that if there be any ruling sentiment in their souls, it is not the fear of God. What, then, is the worth of their Christianity? Of what avail is their creed or their profession? What part or lot can they have in Christ? “Little children, let no man deceive you; he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous.” Whoever would be justified through His blood, must be governed by His fear. Let none say, “The standard set before us is too high for us; we cannot attain to it;—to carry out the fear of God into all the ramifications of commercial life is simply impossible.” “With man it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things

are possible." "If, therefore, thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." Let the question be propounded to the holiest and most consistent merchant in your city, What is the secret of his excellence? and he will answer, "By the grace of God, I am what I am." The same grace is sufficient for all. And let all who name the name of Christ, see to it that they depart from iniquity; that they give no occasion to the men of the world to say, "These godly men pray in the closet, bow down in the sanctuary, shine in the saintly circle; but they can cheat, deceive, and overreach like other men, when they come down into the secularities of earth." Woe to the man by whom such an offense cometh. He is a practical libel on Christianity; his profession is a snare, and his confidence like the spider's web.

But blessed are they who "adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things;" "who are in the fear of the Lord all the day long." They are "epistles of Christ, known and read of all men." Those who have to do with them, take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus. "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

His holy fear ruling in the hearts, and embodying itself in the lives of his faithful ones, will ever prove itself sufficient to carry them through all temptations, and keep them blameless amid all corruptions, till they reach the happy land where perils, adversities, and perplexity will be no more, and where the fear of God will be swallowed up in the fullness of his love.

CHAPTER II.

THE SECRET OF HIS STRENGTH.

It is not life that we see in the living; it is the manifestation of life. Hidden in its essence, it is apparent in its effects. The soul can reveal its powers in a look, in a word, in an action; but the soul itself eludes discovery. Even lower life lies concealed. The life of the tree discloses itself in the tender bud, in the fair blossom, in the ripe fruit; but who can detect the secret spring of all?

If it be thus with natural life, much more must mystery envelop the life of God in the souls of his saints. The Holy Ghost thus describes that life: “Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” Evident in result, fruitful in blessing, effectual in operation, it yet is a mystery which the world cannot conceive, and which the believer himself cannot comprehend. “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit,”—and so is every one that lives in the Spirit. The action is hu-

man, but the energy is divine. No mechanism, however perfect, can dispense with a motive power; it is needed both to put it into action, and to keep it in play after it has been put in motion. So with the graces and faculties of the inner man, the "hidden man of the heart;" they have neither originated nor quickened themselves, neither can they act of their own innate energy. The excellency of the power is *of* Christ, and *in* Christ. "Without me," saith he, "ye can do nothing." The history of the believer's spiritual life is, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Even the master motive is not the spring of action; it is the effect of that spring. Just as it is with the mighty wheel which moves the whole machinery of the factory, it appears as though the impulse it imparts were all its own; but in reality there is a latent power by which that wheel itself is moved, and without which it cannot act.

In the preceding chapter we considered the master principle in the life of faith; we traced its potency; how it restrains from sin, how it constrains to holiness, how it elevates a man above the fear of his fellows,

and gives him an ennobling liberty; how it brings "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart into captivity to the obedience of Christ." But this principle is not self-acting; as it did not create, so it does not sustain itself. While in one view the saint is an agent, in another he is a subject; he only wills and does as God works in him to will and do, of his good pleasure. We now propose to explore the fountain and secret place of that power by which he is enabled to overcome the world.

Human power depends largely on human confidence. The man possessed of a certain iron inflexibility of purpose, based on a proud self-reliance, is the man who ordinarily accomplishes great things in the affairs of earth. Marvelous is the mastery of such a will over weaker and inferior wills; so that for a man whose highest aim is present success, there cannot be a better rule than, "Rely upon yourself, have confidence in your own judgment, never despair of your own efforts." God often allows men of this character to succeed. They have their reward. In self they have confided, and to self they give the praise. But the very converse holds in relation to the strength of those who live not to themselves but to the

Lord; who live not the life of sense but the life of faith. Just in proportion as they distrust themselves, abandon self, and abide in Christ, just in such proportion will his strength be made perfect in their weakness, and will they "be more than conquerors through him that loved them." The curse of man is, that he makes flesh his arm, that he has lost his trust in the living God. How intense this idolatrous tendency, this suicidal fatuity in the heart of man! So intense, that men naturally confide in anything or everything rather than in Him in whom they "live, and move, and have their being." A virtual atheism is practically the state of all who have not been born again of the Spirit. "God is not in all their thoughts;" they plan without consulting him, labor without leaning upon him, prosper without acknowledging him. Man must be brought off from this self-dependence before he can be brought into that dependence on God which is the law of his nature, and the condition of his perfection. By trusting to the creature, he fell from his Creator; by renouncing faith in the creature he returns to his Creator. To reduce him to despair of his own power, is a task so difficult that God alone can bring it to pass. Men will more easily ad-

mit that they have done wrong, that they are guilty before God, than that they cannot return of themselves to the Lord, that they have no power of themselves to help themselves. This is an admission which their pride cannot brook. So prevalent, indeed, is the notion of self-sufficiency, that most men intend to turn to God and prepare for eternity at some future period. It never occurs to them to misgive their ability to do so whenever they shall please. Strange that they should be deaf alike to the testimony of Scripture and to the lessons of experience on the subject of man's spiritual impotency ! Hearken to the voice of the lively oracles. "Without me," says Christ, "ye can do nothing." "We are not sufficient of ourselves," says St. Paul, "to think anything as of ourselves." "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." "When we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." And clear as is the witness of Scripture on this point, no less clear is the confession of every orthodox branch of the Christian Church.

"The condition of man since the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith and calling upon

God. Wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable unto God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will." The work of Christ *for* us was not more indispensable to our salvation than is the work of Christ *in* us. If we are justified wholly by his merit, we are sanctified absolutely by his grace.

The evidence of experience fully sustains the testimony of Scripture. Let any man set about becoming what he feels he ought to be; let him strive to be perfectly upright in all his thoughts and intentions, perfectly accurate in all his words, perfectly kind and charitable in all his feelings, perfectly submissive and devout in all his sentiments toward God. Let him make a conscience of everything within him as well as without him—of the issues of his heart, no less than of the streams of his life; let him struggle to make himself love God with all his heart, soul, and strength, and to love his neighbor as himself; let him do all this with ever so much honesty of purpose and determination of spirit, and what will be the inevitable result? He will discover more and more painfully the depth of his impotency, and

the abortiveness of his efforts. Nay, more, he will find that his inherent corruptions gather intensity from the very resistance which he opposes to them, as the current chafes against the barrier which interrupts but cannot check its course.

A man may, indeed, by his own power, greatly control his external conduct ; he may cease to be a drunkard, or he may abstain from impure indulgences ; but without Christ he can do nothing in the spiritual life ; he cannot give birth to a holy desire, or a good counsel, or a just work. Mere morality, what is visible to man, can grow on the stem of nature ; but “the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God,” these can be borne only by the tree of grace.

Hence it happens that you will frequently find a man gifted with uncommon resolution in the things of this life, who is yet like a straw tossed in the eddies of a stream in relation to the things of God. In the world, a rock ; in the Church, “a wave of the sea driven of the wind, and tossed.” What energy in natural things will the same individual sometimes display, who in spiritual things is the slave of passion and the sport of caprice—led captive at his will by “the

Prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience!" How mournfully manifest, then, that a moral paralysis has passed upon the spiritual powers of man! How essential that a living consciousness of this fact should accompany the soldier of the cross throughout his holy warfare! If he lives in the Spirit, he must also walk in the Spirit. While in the wilderness, he must still be a pilgrim of faith, a tottering child held up by an Almighty hand. The abiding sense of his weakness will keep him hanging upon Christ. "When I am weak," said one who had made the highest attainments in the divine life,—"when I am weak,"—in the deep experimental consciousness of my own weakness,—"then am I strong; strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." What a paradox! What a beautiful paradox! To the Christian how clear, to the unbeliever how strange! What a precious peculiarity of the glorious gospel of the blessed God! It makes known to man his real state—a disclosure exceedingly startling, distasteful, humiliating to him; but it does not stop there. If it reveals to us our guilt, it is that it may reveal to us our righteousness; if it discovers to us our disease, it is that it may discover

to us our remedy ; if it convinces us of our impotency, it is that it may lead us to our strength. Here is the crowning glory of Christianity. Philosophy knew nothing of these heavenly secrets. She could exhibit our desolation ; and bitter, often, and unsparing were her strictures on the foibles and the follies, the miseries and the incongruities of human nature ; but while she could expose the malady, she could not make known the remedy. She could laugh at our helplessness, but she could tell us of no succor. She could paint the beauty of virtue, but she could not enable us to attain it. She could supply the lovely model, but it only served to mock our attempts to copy its perfections. She dealt with us as Pharaoh dealt with the children of Israel ; he bade them make bricks, but he gave them no straw. So philosophy bade man fear God, be devout, upright, benevolent, truthful, rise to the dignity of his nature, and seek his heritage above ; but she spake to a paralytic which could not move—to a corpse which could not hear.

Christ commands the palsied to arise and walk, but he, at the same time, imparts the power to obey the command ; he calls upon the man with the withered hand to stretch it

forth, and, in making the effort, the man is healed. The word of Christ gives us the fullest assurance that his aid shall not be wanting to the faithful. It calls him by the glorious name, "The Strength of Israel." It declares, that "surely shall one say, In the Lord have I strength." It affirms, that "the Lord will give strength to his people." Therefore shall each one of them resolve—"I will go in the strength of the Lord God, and will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only." Absolute dependence on the grace of God for justification, must be accompanied with no less absolute dependence on the strength of God for sanctification. "Whatsoever we do in word or deed, we must do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." Fellowship with him is the life of our life. It pleases God that we should be continually reminded of our union with his Son. He would not have us forget him for a single hour. He therefore gives us spiritual strength as he gives us natural life, day by day, and hour by hour. He gives us no stock in hand. He does not lodge it in ourselves; he retains it in himself, for us. He lives and walks "in us, that we may live and walk through him." He works in us to will and to do of his good

pleasure. He does not will and do for us, nor does he act on us as on passive subjects; but he works in us as rational and responsible agents. We will and do; but it is because he works in us to will and to do. In one view all is his work, in another all is ours; his through us, and ours by him. So that, when we have done all, our language must be that of the apostle, "By grace I am what I am." "I labored more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me." In the least as well as in the greatest, in the secular as well as in the spiritual concerns of the faithful, it is not less their duty than it is their privilege to strengthen themselves in the Lord. He loves that they should have recourse to him. They cannot urge a more prevailing plea than that which the king of Israel used when confronting an overwhelming army: "Help us, O Lord our God, for we trust in thee!" To such an argument he cannot turn a deaf ear. "According to thy faith be it unto thee." "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth," will infallibly be the answer. How true, then, and touching as true, the picture drawn of himself as a pilgrim of faith, by the sweet singer of Israel: "My soul hang-

eth upon thee ; thy right hand upholdeth me !” The figure he employs, brings before us the endearing sight of a father with his little faltering child. The father is leading the child along a dark and rugged way ; the child clings fondly to the father’s hand, urged alike by the consciousness of its own feebleness, and by its confidence in him. And that very weakness so felt, and that very confidence so reposed, prove with the father, though a silent, a most pathetic plea. How can he refuse the gentle grasp of the tiny hand which is locked in his ? Its weakness is irresistible. Even so it is with the child of God. His Father holds his hand, and he in consequence holds his Father’s hand. The firmer he is held, the more will he cling ; and that very clinging constrains the Almighty. Omnipotent in everything else, he is, so to speak, impotent here ; he cannot resist the clinging confidingness of a helpless soul. The great point is to carry this dependence everywhere, and into every thing ; into commerce as well as communion, into the counting-house as well as the closet. How difficult, yet how vital a lesson for the servant of God to learn ! We must not only ask strength from on high, but we must use the strength for which we ask. This must

be done by the immediate exercise of faith even while we are busied in the unbelieving world, while we are mingling of necessity in scenes of sore temptation. Then, when most in danger, we stand most in need of succor; when most surrounded by our enemies, we most require the outstretched arm of God. Our very foes should be our sentinels, and warn us to fly for refuge to the help, as well as the hope, set before us in Christ. As we ought to be "in the fear of God," so ought we to be in the strength of God, "all the day long." The former is effectual only as it is accompanied by the latter. What is done in our own strength is of the flesh, and what is of the flesh cannot please God. How often does it happen that Christian men are led astray, embarrassed by temptation, entangled in false positions, betrayed into giving occasion to the adversary to rail, and to the weak to stumble, because they set about things in their own name, in their own wisdom, in their own might! Had they set the Lord before them, they would not have been moved; had they honored him, he would have honored them.

The secret of the good man's strength lies in the fact that in the face of taunting foes, in emergencies however sudden, in perplex-

ties however harassing, he turns for succor to his God. Like the mystic locks of Samson, this is the symbol of his power ; shorn of it, he is weaker than the bulrush in the gale. But why is it that even Christians are sometimes so appalled by the sneers of the ungodly, so warped by the maxims of a world lying in wickedness, so seduced into petty compliances with some of the doubtful usages of trade ? Is it not because they fail to realize the presence of God, to call in the aid of Omnipotence, to set their backs against the Rock of ages ? Would they but do this, the fear of man would vanish before the fear of God ; then the inquiry in each case would be, first of all, not what is gainful, but what is godly ; then they would feel themselves to be invincible, for the conflict would no longer be theirs but the Lord's ; and his controversy must be triumphant. No duty is too light to require the aid of grace for its performance, nor any too arduous to be practicable through grace. "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fail : but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength ; they shall mount up with wings as eagles ; they shall run, and not be weary ; they shall walk, and not faint." "I

can do all things," said the noblest soldier of the cross, "I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me." "I can do all things"—strange language from the lips of a worm of the dust—"through Christ that strengtheneth me,"—the paradox is solved; how seemly, how grateful the words from the tongue of a lowly believer! Left to himself, "the grasshopper is a burden" to him; Omnipotence aiding him, he can "thresh the mountains."

Nor does this derivation of power seem strange; nor yet does it, in any bad sense, make the saint of God a merely passive instrument. The whole universe is in some sense a machine; there is no power but of God. We talk of the laws of nature, of the forces which keep planets revolving in their spheres; but, after all, how are those laws maintained? how are those forces actuated? It is God that "worketh all in all." "He upholdeth all things by the word of his power." In him all being centers. From the worm that crawls the dust, up to Gabriel, the highest archangel before the throne of God, none has independent life, independent strength, independent holiness, or independent happiness. All is *in* God—as all is *from* God. Why, then, should it be thought a thing

incredible, that “man that is born of a woman”—man, who is shorn through his fall of all primitive purity and all spiritual power, should be utterly dependent from first to last, for the highest life, the life of the Spirit, on the Spirit of “the living God.” And is it not meet and right that he should ever realize his dependency, and be taught to wait perpetually on the fountain of life? At this point we would earnestly say to the Christian reader—Suffer the word of admonition. Beware of self-confidence: “He that trusteth his own heart is a fool.” God resisteth such a one: “The rich he sendeth empty away.” In vain are virtues, purposes, or efforts while self is their staple. Till that idol is abandoned, not a heavenward step is taken. If the ship, however rigged, equipped, and manned, cannot move across the waters of herself, but must have the winds to waft her, how much less can the shattered bark of the human soul win its way through the tempestuous ocean of life to the haven of salvation, except it be borne along by the breath of the Spirit! But the sails must be spread to invite and catch the heavenly gale.

Let the Christian, then, ever remember, that whatever is not done of the ability which

God giveth, is unprofitable and sinful. This great truth ought to be realized in secular business as well as in religious services; grace is needed to traffic aright no less than to pray aright. At the same time let him see to it that the grace afforded be both occupied and confessed to the praise and glory of His grace. Neither should he, for a moment, forget that no work of his can be acceptable to God, but as presented by Him who is the propitiation for our sins, whose blood must sanctify, and whose merits must perfume, all our services.

Let, then, the soldiers of the cross encourage themselves in the Lord, and despair of no attainment, stagger at no duty, shrink from no danger, to which the Lord calls them. When he assigns a task, by that very assignment he pledges himself to give the power to perform it. "Fear not, only believe." "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." Yea; and what a blessed thing it is that we are privileged to live this dependent life! If our strength were in ourselves, we might lose it; but in Christ Jesus it is safe. Our security is in his immutability. We are "kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation." He hath said, "I will

never leave thee nor forsake thee ;” so that we may boldly say, “The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.” Nay, verily, for he hath said again, “ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them ; and I give unto them eternal life ; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all ; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.”

CHAPTER III.

HIS SPIRIT OF DEVOTION.

THE fire on the altar of burnt-sacrifice in the Jewish temple was kindled from heaven. God gave commandment concerning that fire, that it should always be burning—it should never go out. The appointed Levites fed and tended it by night and by day. The sacrifices were not always offering up, but the fire was always in readiness to offer them. How apt an emblem of what the renewed heart should be! The fire of its devotion was lighted from on high; it was enkindled by the Spirit of God. That holy fire ought to be burning; it ought never to go out. The sacrifices of prayer and praise cannot be always ascending; but the flame of devotion to kindle them, as opportunity may serve, ought never to wax dim.

Of all the habits of the new man, there is none more distinctive, none more conducive to his soul's health and happiness, none more essential to his consistency of conduct and beauty of holiness, than this devotional spirit. It has always distinguished

those who have excelled in virtue; it is the distinctive trait of the truly good man, the character we would now portray. We have, in the foregoing chapters, examined the mainspring of his holy life—THE FEAR OF GOD, and traced the secret of his spiritual strength—THE STRENGTH OF GOD MADE PERFECT IN HIS WEAKNESS. We are now to explore the channel through which the spirit of Jesus is infused into his soul. That channel is unceasing prayer. Throughout his checkered career, not only on stated occasions and in hallowed scenes, but everywhere, and under all circumstances, whether in the midst of foes or in the seclusion of the closet, harassed by occupations or under the excitement of dangers, you find him still true to the mercy-seat, still lifting up his heart to God. “Think upon me, O my God, for good;” “O God, strengthen my hands;” “Think upon me, and have mercy upon me, according to the multitude of thy mercies.” Such are the devout breathings which again and again break forth from his heart.

We propose, therefore, as the subject of this chapter, to consider the exercise of ejaculatory prayer—the habit of lifting up the heart in brief aspirations to God in all places and under all circumstances;—thus

hallowing the commonest pursuits of life, and turning the warehouse or the work-shop into a house of prayer. God grant to us the spirit of grace and supplication while we dwell on this vital theme!

Few have any just conception of the essence of prayer. Very many, when they think of praying, think of it as necessarily involving a formal kneeling down in the closet or the sanctuary, and a presenting our petitions in a set manner to God. This, no doubt, when spiritual, is preëminently prayer; but if a man never prays anywhere save in the closet, the family, or the temple, there is every reason to fear that he never prays at all. For, if he prayed truly in these consecrated spots, he could not repress the silent aspiration that would sometimes gush from his heart in the market-place, in the counting-house, in the social circle, as he sat in his house, and as he walked by the way. If the spirit of genuine devotion animated his stated worship, it could not be inert all the day besides. The sad formality which man has superinduced on the religion of Christ, has tended to foster many unscriptural notions on the subject of devotion. Hence it is that multitudes have thought that they must come out of the world in

order to hold communion with God—hence they have sought the cell in the wilderness or the gloom of the cloister, that they might spend their days and nights in converse with Heaven. But, counteracting God's purpose, they have generally failed of their object, and it is no breach of charity to say that, for the most part, while *they* left the world *the world* did not leave them ; and that, in many instances, the monastery and the nunnery, instead of being houses of prayer, were dens of thieves. The religion of Jesus is far too practical to abstract us from the duties of our stations, or from the relationships of social life. Instead of interfering with them, it secures that they shall be effectually performed ; it cheers, sustains, and sanctifies us in their performance. It converts the toils, the cares, the ills of ordinary life into a heavenly discipline ; bracing our principles by bringing them into conflict —strengthening our devotion by calling it into exercise. The devout spirit, like the well-strung *Æolian* harp, not only gives forth sweet sounds when woken by the gentler breathings that steal over its chords, but when vibrating under the ruder blasts that sweep across its strings. We could not have the rule of life more beautifully expressed

than it is in the language of the apostle: "Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." Let us see to it, that this fervency of spirit pervade our secular occupations, and our business will invigorate our devotion, while our devotion will hallow our business. To be slothful in business will quench devotion as fatally as to pursue business with inordinate affection. The hardest devotion is the healthiest. The devotion of the cloister is for the most part like the ghastly light that hovers over decomposition and decay; the devotion which characterizes the diligent, spiritually-minded man of business, resembles the star which shines on in the storm as in the calm —when the sky is clouded as when it is serene.

It is, then, utterly a mistake to suppose, that except a man bend the knee and use the language of supplication, he cannot pray to God. How beautiful and appropriate is the language of the Christian poet, in which he celebrates the power of prayer, and it is scriptural as it is lovely!—

"Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Utter'd or unexpress'd;
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.

“Prayer is the burden of a sigh,—
The falling of a tear,—
The upward glancing of an eye,
When none but God is near.”

The sigh of the penitent is prayer in God’s ear ; the desire of the sorrowful is heard by the Omniscient. Language is necessary to communicate our sentiments and feelings to our fellows ; not so to convey them to him who knows our thoughts long before we conceive them—“ who knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God.” Be assured of it, there may be no praying where there are long prayers —there may be much prayer where not a word is spoken. There are groanings unutterable which the Spirit excites in the heart of the believer that prevail mightily with God ; while the long-spun address of the Pharisee standing in the synagogue, or at the corners of the street, is loathsome to Him who requireth truth in the inward parts. The more steadily the spirit of prayer burns in any soul, the more surely does it prove that soul to be alive to God. For prayer is to spiritual, what respiration is to natural life. When we cease to breathe, we cease to live ; when we cease to pray, we die in the sight of God. If our breathing

be stopped for a little while, what an agony will ensue till we recover its play ! So with the inner man. Let the exercise of prayer be for a season suspended in the devout heart, and there will be an agonizing struggle till communion with God is renewed. "While I kept silence my bones waxed old, through my roaring all the day long," said the Psalmist, when reviewing the dark period in which he had restrained prayer before God.

Where ought we not to pray ! The ear of God is never shut—the mercy-seat is never remote. It is as near in the warehouse as in the chamber ; as accessible in the market-place as in the sanctuary. The arrow from the bow of faith pierces heaven in the twinkling of an eye ; nor through the Mediator does the faintest ejaculation fail of a reply. The prayer of faith never fell to the ground. In the disclosures of eternity it will be found that not a believing desire was ever unfulfilled. Its fulfillment cannot always be discerned at present ; but it is not therefore less sure or less real.

Ah ! who can represent in adequate terms the importance and the privilege of thus perpetually calling upon God ? When can it be out of season—where can it be out of

place? If a man can find the scene where he needs not serve God, then he will have found the scene where he needs not pray to God. But wherever a man is bound to do the will, there is he called upon to ask the aid, of the Master whom he serves. We cannot carry this principle too far: in spirit we ought to live upon our knees. If in any step we need not divine guidance, if in any work we need not divine strength, if in any enterprise we need not the divine blessing, then in projecting that step, in prosecuting that work, in undertaking that enterprise, we need not pray. But if Christ is all and in all, then always and in all must we call upon his name. On how many occasions does a servant of God suddenly require special assistance, special counsel, special care! What urgent emergencies will unexpectedly arise! How frequently are men of business called upon to decide summarily on questions big with importance, to make up their judgment at once on measures the issues of which they can neither over-estimate nor foresee. At such critical junctures ought they not to consult Him who knows the end from the beginning, whose counsel, it shall stand; who has said, "in all thy ways acknowledge me, and I will direct thy

paths?" Yet they cannot enter into their closet; opportunity for this does not serve. What then? Can they not with all the speed of thought refer the case to God—call in his wisdom to be made perfect in their foolishness? How it assures the understanding—how it abates the crushing weight of unshared responsibility, so to take counsel with the Omniscient!

Take a specific illustration. How commonly is the physician forced to form his conclusion in a moment; yea, to form it on uncertain grounds and indeterminate symptoms? Yet a mistaken conclusion may endanger the life of his patient. Now if, in such circumstances, the medical man rely simply on his own skill, and confer with his own judgment, to the neglect of calling in the wisdom and blessing of the Almighty, what a fearful risk and burden does he bring upon himself! But let his heart breathe forth the aspiration to God, "Lord, direct me: Lord, I commit this case to thee: prosper me according to thy mercy!" Then, having cast his burden on the Lord, having invoked unerring skill, he will be able to act with faith and calmness. Is this fanaticism? The grossest fanaticism is that which leaves out God. If he be anywhere, he is

everywhere ; if he be in anything, he is in everything. If he order the seraph's flight, he ordains the sparrow's fall ; if he telleth the number of the stars, he numbereth the very hairs of the heads of his saints. The minuteness of Providence is the perfection of Providence ; and minute as is his providence, so minute, if possible, should be our prayers ; the only limit of our supplications should be the limit of his gracious interpositions. Since he is above all, and through all, and in all, let us look to him *for* all, let us look to him *in* all.

The unforeseen vicissitudes to which we are exposed, should keep us ever on the wing of prayer. How suddenly do perils, changes, and perplexities spring up ! What can we do, then, but watch and pray ? We cannot watch as we ought without praying ; we cannot pray as we ought without watching. Watch in all things, and you will pray in all things. This reasoning gathers additional strength from the fact that the opportunities for stated prayer which many persons enjoy are few and straitened. Artisans who toil late and early, young men who almost live behind the desk or the counter, servants who are occupied from dawn till night in their domestic duties, can seldom,

or never, secure seasons for retirement during the pressure of their daily tasks. Some time may, indeed, be redeemed from the pillow to be consecrated to God by his people; but are they to have no further intercourse with him throughout the day? That must not, need not be. While the hand is toiling for the bread that perisheth, the soul may be holding converse with the Father of our spirits. However the mind may be exercised in business, there may be parentheses of prayer, and interjections of praise, checkering and elevating our occupations all the while. Never let the busied servant, never let the harassed tradesman say, "I have no time for converse with my God." Only take heed that your hearts be not absorbed by your worldly conduct, and you will find many a fleeting opportunity for intercourse with Him who is about your path, and hearkens to your slightest thought.

The snares and foes which beset a career of business, ought to turn one's eyes continually to "the stronghold whereunto you may always resort." In the vicissitudes of commercial affairs, in the complicated transactions with his fellows, how subtly will temptation often steal upon one; sometimes in the shape of a friend, who comes to draw

him into some doubtful speculation; sometimes in the shape of an alluring offer of gain at the cost of some small sacrifice of conscience; at another time in the form of seductive openings, fitted to beguile him into adventuring beyond what his resources warrant; in these and a thousand other disguises will Satan lie in wait to deceive. Meantime, in concert with the world and with the wicked one, will man's own false, foolish heart strive hard to deceive, and deceiving, to betray him. We know not where the trap is laid; we know not whence the shaft may be aimed. Where, then, is our safety? where, but in flying at the moment for refuge to our God? Were we alive as we ought to be to the perils that surround us in our pilgrimage through life, we should never presume to lose sight of the mercy-seat. Travelers make mention of a bird so timid in disposition, and so liable to the assaults of unnumbered enemies, that she almost lives in the sky, scarcely ever venturing to rest her wings; and even when forced through very weariness to repose, she seeks the loftiest rock, and there still keeps her eyes only half shut, and her pinions only half folded—in readiness on the first sign of danger to spread her wings and soar away

to the heavens for safety. What an apt emblem of how the child of God should "pass the time of his sojourning here!" Seldom should the wing of his devotion droop, or the eye of his watchfulness close; and when he must repose, it should ever be in an attitude of vigilance and prayerfulness, prepared at the first signal of approaching danger to mount upward, and find his refuge in the bosom of his God.

Say not that devotion will be out of harmony with some of the scenes in which men of business mingle. Wherever duty calls, devotion may accompany them. Where a man would shrink from praying, he ought to shrink from going. Tell me the circle or the recreation where the Christian cannot consistently lift up his heart to God, where it would seem a kind of solemn mockery to ask for his presence and blessing, and I will tell you the circle or the recreation where, as a Christian, he should not be. If it is not a place meet for prayer, it is not a place meet for him. No engagement in which he fears to ask the Lord to bless him can be right. Take, as a sure test of the character of any plan, pleasure, or pursuit, the simple question, "Can I implore the divine blessing upon it?" If not, then let it

be foregone. You cannot enter upon it without guilt. For "whatsoever is not of faith is sin," and whatsoever cannot be sanctified by prayer, is not of faith, and consequently must be sinful in the sight of God. This is a practical rule of much value. Young men should carry it with them into the midst of their avocations, their relaxations, their companionships; let them apply it honestly, and it will serve them faithfully.

Very elevating and hallowing is the influence which a pervading habit of prayer will exert on the mind of a man, however he may be immersed in business. It will keep him from being secularized by his occupations; it will save him from the debasement of pursuing mere money-making as his end, of expending the energies of the immortal spirit on the accumulation of shining dust; *it will keep him above the world, while occupied in the world*; it will enable him to look upon it clearly, undazzled by its meteors, and unbewildered by its mists. Like the noble bird that, strong in wing, towers far above the clouds, mounts into the clear blue sky, hovers amid the undimmed beams of the sun, and thence surveys the landscape spread below him; the loftier his flight, the smaller appear the objects he has

left behind: so to those who in frequent communion with God by faith mount up on wings like an eagle—to them the things of earth look very small—the things of heaven incomparably great.

This is the secret for keeping the world in its proper place. So kept, it will not become our master—it will be our servant; and it is a good servant, but a miserable master. Need it be added, that a devotional spirit will greatly tend to keep the temper unruffled, and the mind serene? Too frequently, even the sincere servants of God reflect little of the meekness and lowliness of Christ amid the excitements of business; men cannot “take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus.” They betray an eagerness for gain, a keenness in driving a bargain, an irritability of feeling, an inordinacy of desire, a want of kindness, generosity, and forbearance toward others, an absence of sympathy toward their dependents, and of consideration toward their equals, which mars the harmony of their character, neutralizes their influence for good, and brings reproach on the holy name which they bear. And all this occurs because they do not set the Lord always before them. And this perpetual recognition of God is to be secured only by

calling upon him in everything. Let the Christian who is of a peevish and excitable temper, instead of justifying himself by pleading that "it is natural" to him, learn a lesson from that heathen philosopher of whom we read, that being subject to paroxysms of anger, he resolved to overcome the fault, and in order to do so made it a rule, whenever he felt the first risings of wrath, to repeat to himself some lines from Homer which are of a very soothing and subduing kind; and such was the effect, that ultimately he became as noted for his gentleness as he had before been for his irritability. Will not this heathen rise up in judgment against many a Christian who ought to know and follow a more excellent way? Ought not he, when passion or perturbation shake his breast, to lift up his heart to Him who said to the winds and waves of the sea of Galilee, "Peace, be still, and there was a great calm;" and who is no less able and ready to rebuke the swelling surges of the soul, and hush them into peace?

There is nothing a believer may not master if he encounter as well as defy it in the name of Jesus, and in the power of prayer. However he may pray against his besetting sin in the closet, if he forget God in the

moment of assault, there is little reason to hope that he will prevail. He must meet his enemy on his knees that he may conquer. Equally benign is the influence of incessant prayer in keeping the mind from being fevered by the excitements or fretted by the anxieties of business. It will oil the wheels and abate the friction of mercantile life. It is not so much the physical toil or the mental strain which a man undergoes in the struggle of the world, that wears out his health and exhausts his energies, as it is the worry and vexation, the anxiety and suspense, which naturally befall him in his harassing career; these are the things which waste his spirits, consume his energies, and precipitate his death. How, then, are these effects to be averted? How, but by "casting all your care on Him who careth for you," "and in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, letting your requests be made known unto God?" This is the antidote to the fret and fever which consume so many of the eager traffickers of our day. The breath of devotion will diffuse a dewy freshness and calm over the spirit even amid the heat and dust of the harassing world.

Nor ought we to fail to notice how be-

nignly the habit of ejaculatory devotion will tell on our seasons of stated communion. It will effectually subserve the converse of the closet, and the worship of the sanctuary. Many can witness, that when they enter the chamber or the temple, they find it hard indeed to rally and concentrate their thoughts, which are scattered amid worldly plans and wandering after gains. Complaints of distractions in prayer are constant, and bitter as constant. But why is it thus? Because the instrument, once unstrung, is long before it can be tuned anew. Let it be kept in tune all the day long, and the time now lost in tuning it would be spent in sweeping sweet music from its strings. If men allow their business throughout the day to chain their thoughts to earth, their closet at eventide will hardly raise their spirits to the skies.

He who does not take a prayerful spirit into his house of merchandise, runs a great risk of taking his business into the house of prayer. He cannot spread his table for traffic or for money-changing in the holy place; yet in the sight of God, he may desecrate it as really as those who of old were driven from the temple by Him who said, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." The way,

therefore, to have our heart in harmony with the worship of the sanctuary and the communion of the closet, is never to suffer its chords to be jarred. It was said of a distinguished Christian of other days, that he lived on the steps of the mercy-seat. It is the testimony borne to an eminent Christian of the present age that "he lives upon his knees." This is to live safely—this is to live in heaven. Hence it was said by a dying saint, "I am changing my place, but not my company." Like Enoch, he had walked with God, and death to him was but rising from the foot-stool to the throne; or like going out of the porch into the inner sanctuary.

Is there not cause to fear many professed Christians have never thought on this wise of prayer? It may be, that from childhood they have repeated some form of devotion, more or less stately; sometimes perhaps intermitted, and afterward resumed; but has it not been a body unquickened by a soul? Had it been living, it would have been breathing; and had it been breathing, the breath of life would have given it quickened activity. Let it sink deep into our hearts; for it is a true saying, if we confine our prayers to our chambers, there is reason to

fear that we never pray at all. For were the flame of devotion kindled in the closet, it could not be suppressed throughout the occupations of the day ; the rather, as we need the protection far more in the midst of the world, than we need it in the hour of retirement. It is not on parade, while going through his exercises in peace, but when called into the struggles of the battle-field, that the soldier needs all his courage and his skill. And so with the soldier of the cross : it is when forced to grapple with the temptations, the difficulties, and the perils of an evil world, that he most needs to pray, and to watch unto prayer. Should this test convince my reader that he has never prayed in truth, let him now cry out as the apostles did : "Lord, teach us to pray !" And let him give no rest to the throne of grace till the promise is fulfilled, "I will pour upon them the spirit of grace and of supplication." The body can no more breathe without the soul, than the soul can breathe without the Holy Ghost. He is the soul of the soul. Spiritual life begins when he enters the soul. Then, as the infant on its birth shows that it is alive by its feeble cry, so will the new-born babe in Christ evince its life by prayer ; and the first aspiration that bursts from his

heart, is the first respiration of immortality —a slight indication, but of a revolution so stupendous, that only God can span it; a change so lasting, that eternity alone can measure it.

Christian men of business, in these days of high pressure especially, ought to beware lest the devotional spirit be overborne by the world. Are they earnest and diligent in their callings? We do not find fault with them for their diligence and earnestness; on the contrary, we believe that as a man cannot succeed in his pursuits without being diligent, so he should look upon diligence as his obvious duty. But business should never be allowed to smother devotion. If it does, the trafficking is for hell; the merchandise of glory is bartered for the merchandise of dust. A conscious dependence upon God must everywhere be kept alive. His presence must be realized in every place; his blessing must be asked on every undertaking: this is wisdom, this is safety, this is peace. Let any that can, look back upon their lives and say that they ever, in faithfulness and submission, asked for God's guidance in forming, and for his blessing in prosecuting, any plan, and found reason at last to bewail the issue. But

how many steps taken, how many opinions formed, how many engagements entered into, how many undertakings ventured upon, without seeking divine interposition, have ultimately filled their subjects with sorrow and shame! Happy are they whose own backslidings have corrected them—who have reaped the fruit of their unfaithfulness in this world. Whom the Lord loveth, he rebuketh and chasteneth. If their prayerless purposes had prospered, their prosperity would have been sent in anger, not in love. Happy, too, will it be for us, if we learn wisdom from the things we suffer. We ought to go to God with everything, nor fear to weary his love. Nothing should be counted too small for his notice. Does the frequency of his child's appeals displease a tender father? Whatever interests us, will interest our heavenly Father. Whatever is not too minute to engage our attention, is not too insignificant to be submitted to his.

No other habit can so effectually as this counteract the secularizing influence of trade; no other will more smooth the ruggedness of life's path, or more secure the consistency of Christian character. And shall we not rejoice that the Lord's "ear is ever open to our prayers;" that Jesus "ever

liveth to make intercession for us?" Sur-passing privilege! Incomprehensible grace! Be it ours to make full proof of the grace—to take full advantage of the privilege. Let death find us in the spirit, if not in the act, of prayer.

CHAPTER IV.

RELIANCE ON GOD'S BLESSING.

ONE of the holiest and most devoted of modern missionaries, when, after surmounting almost insuperable difficulties, he had accomplished the translation of Holy Scripture into a language of surpassing difficulty, inscribed upon the last page of his manuscript this memorable saying:—"I give it, as the result of long experience, that prayer and pains, with faith in Christ Jesus, will enable a man to do anything." Pains, if they be godly pains, will always be hallowed by prayer; and prayer, if it be genuine prayer, will always be followed up by pains. But that both may be successful, there must be faith in Christ Jesus. Whatever efforts we make, and however we may be strengthened to make them, we cannot command the result. The result is still with Him who "doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest Thou?" A profound conviction of this truth is essential to the

life of faith—essential to constrain us in all our doings to hang only upon God.

We have endeavored, in the foregoing chapters, to indicate the *great principle* that must actuate the servant of God, and the *secret of the strength* by which he may be enabled to obey that principle, and also the *channel* through which that strength is continually derived to his soul. But the confidence that shall suffice to uphold him in all and through all his toils and perils must rest not only on the succor that is promised to him, but on the ultimate success of which he is no less assured. He should not more entirely trust in God that, in the fulfillment of his duty, his blessing will crown his exertion. He should regard himself as no less dependent for the issue, than for the effort, on Him who perfects his wisdom in his children's foolishness, his strength in their weakness, his grace in their unworthiness, and his sovereignty in their success. He has undertaken a most arduous work: a work beset with every circumstance fitted to dishearten; a work to which he confesses his own resources and agencies are unequal; a work which has to be carried on in the face of the bitterest antagonism of adversaries who laugh it to scorn,—the strange work of liv-

ing in the world and yet escaping its defilements.

The principle which underlies the practical recognition of God in all the events of ordinary life is, that for results, just as much as for duties, we are utterly dependent upon him. We are very apt to lose sight of this truth; either, on the one hand, presuming on consequences as inevitable, or, on the other, not content with being vigilant and energetic in the pursuit of our objects, we harass ourselves about the issue of our endeavors. We take upon ourselves the burden of the result, when we should only take upon ourselves the yoke of obedience to the will of God. Yea, and even for that obedience, as was shown in a former chapter, we are to confide in the grace which is sufficient for us. Surely if we rely upon God for strength to fulfill every duty, we should no less rely upon him to crown the discharge of every duty with success. If no effort is of us, but as it is of God, must not the upshot of all our efforts be still more palpably in his hands? If, therefore, we have to confide in him, in order that we may do anything that is good, it follows that we must repose upon him, in order that what we do may be brought to good effect.

That we may exercise such reliance, it is essential that we realize the all-pervading, all-controlling government of the Lord God Omnipotent. In creed, we all avouch that sovereignty; yet in the practical details of life, where is the Christian who carries out this faith in all its bearings and in all its influences? The general providence of God, his sway over systems and worlds and nations, and even over events of magnitude and moment, we do not deny. To deny this would be virtual atheism. But to own God as fashioning every link in the complicated chain of our history; to discern his hand in the least as well as in the greatest; to realize a providence which overrules what is evil, as well as orders what is good—a providence which restrains the unwilling, while it leads the obedient—a providence so transcendent, that none and nothing can thwart it; so minute, that none and nothing can escape it—a providence which directs the insect's wing and the atom's flutter, as well as the planet's course and the archangel's flight—to do this clearly, constantly, and experimentally, is an attainment in the divine life as rare as it is precious; yet this, and nothing less than this, is warranted, or rather commanded, by such expressions as “in

Him we live, and move, and have our being ;" "the wrath of man shall praise him, and the remainder of wrath he will restrain ;" "not a sparrow is forgotten before God ;" "not a sparrow falleth to the ground without our heavenly Father's will ;" "the very hairs of our head are all numbered." We must interweave these assurances with the tissue and texture of our lives; they must enter as an essential element into the formation of our purposes, and into the conduct of our pursuits. It is thus we "must walk with God." It is thus we must wait upon him, as "working all things according to the counsel of his will." It is thus we must trust in him, and be "doing good ;" "commit our way to him, that he may bring it to pass." If, however, we are to have confidence in God's paternal providence while pursuing our designs, it is essential that we should pursue them as his servants. We must be assured that we are obeying his will. We must be diligent because obedient. "The God of heaven, he will prosper us." What then? Shall we sit still, till God accomplish the work by miracle? shall we wait, expecting that God will fulfill his own designs? No, but because of his promised aid, we will be the more diligent; we

will labor, "forasmuch as we know our labor is not in vain in the Lord." It is thus, in doing the will of God, that we must look for the blessing of God. So that, if we are not satisfied that the purpose we are cherishing, or the friendships we are forming, or the undertaking we are enterprising, has the divine sanction, and is in harmony with our duty, we cannot proceed in the calm hope that "God will prosper us." Nothing can animate and sustain a Christian like the persuasion, "I am about my Father's business ; I am where he would have me be ; I am doing what he would have me do." The first question, therefore, in all cases is, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ?" "Is this *thy* way ?" "Then it shall be *my* way." "Is this *thy* pleasure ?" "Then it shall be *my* pleasure." We must take every step in faith. We must "hear a word behind us, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it; when we turn to the right hand or turn to the left." Then, only then, shall we pursue our path in the sweet conviction that all must be well, everlastingly well; for the result is not ours, but His whom we serve.

While, however, we reckon, without wavering, that God will insure to us a happy result, we must leave the time, and the cir-

cumstances, and the character of the result entirely in his hands. We are not to prescribe, but to submit; we are not to say, "Thus it must be," but "Father, thy will, not mine, be done!" It is enough for us to know that the issue shall be "according to the good pleasure of his will," though it may not prove according to our narrow forecastings, or congenial to our natural desires. Disappointment may be the result, and yet God have prospered us; heaviness and trouble the consequence, and yet God have blessed us. He may have been disappointing our earthly expectations for the purpose of strengthening our heavenly hopes. He may have been overshadowing our prospects here, for the purpose of brightening our visions of the future. He may have been denying us perishing wealth, in order to augment our imperishable riches. He may have been bereaving us of the honor that cometh from man, in order to give us more of the honor that cometh from himself. It is indispensable that we should bear this in mind, else we may be haunted with the impression that God has failed to prosper us, though we began to build in his name. Success, in the judgment of God, is widely different from success in the judgment of men.

The Lord often fulfills his promises by seeming to break them. Abraham went forth from his home and country in the obedience of faith ; yet, when he reached the promised land, God "gave him no inheritance in it—no, not so much as to set his foot on." By faith, Moses led Israel out of Egypt, yet he was shut up forty years in the wilderness, and never printed his footmark on the holy land. We must see "the end of the Lord," before we fully understand his ways. Meantime, suffice it that he has assured us, in relation to the man whose "delight is in the law of the Lord," that "whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." Here let us rest. To this let us cling. Here is a sheet-anchor which never drags. Bear in mind, that in this world we see but fragments of the divine plan ; we catch but glimpses of the concatenation of the divine chain. When we shall see as we are seen, and know as we are known, then will the symmetry of the plan, and the perfection of the chain, be clear as the light of heaven. Then shall we discern what now it is so hard to conceive, that "all things work together for good to them that love God ;" that the almighty Master of the universe harmonizes all things, however jarring, in our history, in such wise as to

make all eventuate in one chorus of eternal praise.

Such is the principle which a Christian ought to carry into all the duties of his secular, and all the struggles of his spiritual life. He will find its influence alike practical and blessed. Truly practical, it will give sails to his vessel—oil to his machinery. A man tossed to and fro with apprehensions is unfitted for exertion ; he wastes in a flickering blaze the oil which should feed a steady flame. Solitude about the result, paralyzes his effort for its attainment. But relieve him of this burden, and you prepare him for his task. Nothing so effectually unnerves the arm as an anxious mind. And whence does such a mind usually spring? From taking upon ourselves the care of consequences, instead of devoting our attention to duties alone. Let the Christian commit his way unto the Lord, trust in him, and be doing good, and what hung like a millstone round his energies will be gone, and he will gird up his loins and pursue his course, like the unchained eagle mounting into the sky. Nothing so effectually emboldens a man to do right as the confidence that all things are in his Father's hands. What can divert, what dishearten, what withstand him who can, in

the depth of conscious sincerity, say, "The God of heaven will prosper me."

And the principle is potent as it is practical. "Knowledge is power," says the philosopher. "Faith is power," says the saint. It endues the believer with a sort of derived omnipotence. "If thou canst believe," said Christ, "all things are possible to him that believeth." And what is faith? Confidence in God—confidence in his almighty power and faithfulness; a confidence which nerves the soul for every task. Whether, therefore, for spiritual or for secular duty, whether for duty in the outer or the inner life, there is no principle can brace a man like the principle of implicit trust in God. Let a believer once rise to the height of this principle, and he will smile at difficulty, and be calm in danger. Let him be assured that God says, "Do this," and he will say, "It shall be done; Thou wilt enable me to do it. I am but a clay vessel for thee to use; the excellency of the power is all thine own. The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom then shall I be afraid?" Here is the power which enabled the saints of old to "quench the violence of fire, to stop the mouths of lions; out of weak-

ness to be made strong, to wax valiant in fight, to put to flight the armies of the aliens." In the might of this confidence, the believer can advance through the storm as through the calm, in the midst of darkness as in the midst of day. Nor is this faith less fitted to regulate, than it is to invigorate in all circumstances and in all anxieties. Is the result with God? Then the grand inquiry is, not what is pleasant, but what is right; not what is plausible, but what is sound; not what looks most likely to prosper, but what can anticipate success from God. This singleness of reliance will secure singleness of judgment; and the believer will have but one supreme study in all his pursuits, earthly as well as heavenly—to ascertain and fulfill the will of his Father in heaven. Steering by this chart, how steady will be his course, and how fixed his helm! While others are tossed to and fro by conflicting winds and opposing currents, he will be borne along as by a gulf-stream, and wafted as by a trade-wind.

Need it be added, that this principle will sweetly compose and calm the Christian in the pursuit of his earthly duties? He who is actuated by it can be tranquil under reproaches, misconstructions, and misrepresent-

ations. He will "hold him still in the Lord," as the Psalmist beautifully expresses it. "Still in the Lord"—self-possessed and unruffled in him, as overruling all things—as doing all things well. Such a one will be able to act on the counsel given in the same expressive psalm: "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass." "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass; and he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday." Hence it was that the man of God, already specially referred to, was not careful to answer the bad men who laughed his design to scorn, and charged him with treason against his king. He contented himself with simply protesting, "The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build." Them who thus honor God, he will honor. No matter how dark the path which the believer pursues, if only he pursue it without faltering; for "light is sown for the righteous," however long it may be before it spring forth. "Though it tarry, wait for it; for at last it shall come, and shall not tarry."

Your labor cannot be in vain, if it be labor in the Lord.

Is it not then clear as the sunshine, that a single eye to the blessing of God, as the spring of all exertion and the source of all success, is of vital moment in all our undertakings, whether spiritual or secular? Here must we find nerve and confidence for the mighty work which is accomplishing, or has to be accomplished, within us—personal salvation. Let us consider the natural condition of our souls. Does it not resemble a city in ruins, “the walls broken down, and the gates thereof burned with fire?” But it is not the will of God that our moral being should remain thus desolate. “This is the will of God, even your sanctification.” This is the will of God, even that out of the ruins of our nature there should be raised up a temple within us for “a habitation of God through the Spirit.” Let no one, then, stagger at the greatness of the task, or at the difficulties which beset it, or at the impotency of his own efforts. Let him set about the glorious work in the assurance that God is with him, and will not suffer him to fail in the attempt. Listen to his exhortations, which are all likewise gracious promises. “Build up yourselves on your most holy

faith, praying in the Holy Ghost." "Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity"—till the top-stone of the living temple be brought forth "with shoutings of grace, grace unto it." Be "confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in his children, will perfect it until the day of Christ."

Take this principle, and apply it also in our efforts "to set forth the glory of God, and set forward the salvation of all men." In these latter days, God sets before his people many great and effectual doors of usefulness. Let no one say, "I am weak, and have small resources—how can I accomplish aught?" It is the same with God to save by the few, as by the many—to discomfit his enemies by the crash of earthen pitchers, as by the serried hosts of the mighty. "Who hath despised the day of small things?" How slight the first streak of dawn! How minute the grain of mustard-seed! Some of the noblest exploits in the Church have had the feeblest beginnings. Look at the birth of the great work of latter-

day evangelization. A few Christian men met together in obscurity and seeming feebleness; they pondered and prayed over the state of the heathen world; they conceived and planned the glorious enterprise of evangelizing all Pagan lands. What has been the result? The God of heaven has prospered them. The missionary enterprise has assumed a definite form, and put forth the inherent energy of vital Christianity, and now counts the children which it has borne to God by tens of thousands; missionaries are preaching in almost every tongue the wondrous works of God; and all the ends of the earth are white already unto the harvest. "What hath God wrought?" "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth"—if only it be fire from above.

Regard not, then, the difficulties that may block up the path of usefulness, but have respect to the promises of God. Say not with the slothful, "There is a lion in the way," nor with the faithless, "It cannot be done." Ask, Is it right—am I called to attempt it? Then ask no more. What may not the humblest believer achieve, who sets about his work in the strength, and rests for the result upon, the arm of the Almighty?

O that Christians would learn to ask great

things—attempt great things—expect great things! only to ask in faith, attempt in strength divine, and build all their expectations on the faithfulness of Him that hath promised,—that they would carry this waiting upon God alone into all their commercial and secular affairs; enter into no partnership, form no scheme, embark in no speculation, upon which they cannot invoke the blessing of the Lord. And, having so done—having asked counsel of God—then let them be not wavering or distrustful as to the issue; patiently pursuing the course that is set before them, and letting the Lord do what seemeth him good. Results are his alone. We have no right to intermeddle with them. They are the province of another. “The morrow shall take thought for the things of itself; sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” God is as much in the future as he is in the present; there is no variability, no darkness, no futurity with him. “We walk by faith, not by sight.” So, even amid all the temptations, perplexities, sorrows, and failures to which good men will be subjected in this strange, transitory scene, “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep their hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen.

CHAPTER V.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF GOD'S HAND.

HARD by the altar of burnt-offering stood the altar of incense in the ancient Temple. As the one symbolized the atonement to be made by Christ, and the other the fragrant merits of that atonement; so did the former represent also the offering of prayer to God through Christ's mediation by his faithful people, and the latter the oblation of praise, presented through the same intercession as a sweet-smelling savor to the Lord. Prayer and praise are twin services. They should go hand in hand in the life of the pilgrim of faith. How beautifully are they linked together in the precepts of Scripture!

In the lessons of inspiration we have in one verse the injunction—"Pray without ceasing;" and in the next the kindred command—"In everything give thanks." So, when we are bidden to be "careful for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication," to let our requests be made known unto God, it is added, "with thanksgiving." Incense ought always to be min-

gled with the burnt-offering; the prayer that is not savoured with praise is lacking in sweetness. Yet such is the pride, the selfishness, and the unbelief of the human heart, that there is no duty—we ought rather to say, no privilege—more shamefully slighted than the duty—the privilege—of praise. How many will sue to God in the storm, who straightway forget him in the calm; how many will call upon him in the day of their trouble, who fail to acknowledge him in the day of their deliverance; how many will cry unto him for succor in the hour of peril, who never own his hand, when rescued from their danger, in answer to their cries! If there be one token more than another that bespeaks the depth of our fall, it is the depth of our ingratitude. Ungodliness is the spiritual epidemic of our nature; unthankfulness, one of the most palpable evidences of that ungodliness. Men who will be grateful, most grateful, to the mother that bare and nursed them—men who will be grateful, most grateful, to the father that fed and taught and trained them—men who will glow with gratitude toward the friend that stood by them in the hour of their distress;—these very men will never think of the Father of their spirits—never think of Him

who has loved them with infinitely more than a mother's tenderness, and be all coldness toward the friend who so loved them that he laid down his life for them. How loathsome is ingratitude toward man, even in the eyes of men! How would a person be reprobated, and almost execrated, as unworthy of the name of man, who should behave toward a mortal benefactor as too many of us behave toward the Father of mercies and God of all consolation!

The genuine and truly noble servant of God acts not on this wise. He not only lifts up his heart in prayer when he is in distress, but after his prayer has been answered, he does not overlook the hand that had succored him. Nor does he ascribe to himself the success of his measures, nor burn incense to his own vanity, and rob God of the glory due to his name. We have traced out the spirit of devotion which pervades his character; we have seen how he communes with God, not only in the closet and the sanctuary, but how in the midst of multitudes, when encompassed with perils and insults and perplexities, he still holds secret converse with the skies. Now the same spirit of faith that leads him thus to live in prayer, leads him also to live in praise.

Now it is this spirit, pervading the daily walk of the devout man of business, leading him to recognize the divine hand in all of his mercies—acknowledge all his blessings as coming from God—regard all his acquisitions as belonging to God—use all his talents and possessions as the fruits of God's manifold grace—it is this excellent spirit that we would portray, and commend as worthy of all acceptation.

Ingratitude is the child of pride; thankfulness, the offspring of humility. A proud man will never be truly grateful; an humble man possesses the first element of gratitude. Even in the intercourse of man with man, you will find this rule hold good. Benefit a vain man, and he will ascribe the service to his own desert, he will look upon it as no more than a just tribute to his excellence; but serve a lowly man, and he will attribute the service to the kindness of his benefactor. A proud child thinks that he has laid his parents under obligations: a lowly child feels that he can never liquidate the debt of gratitude he owes to them. The same rule holds in relation to God. You must be lowly, if you would be grateful. The bird that builds the lowest nest, soars the highest in the bright blue sky. The lark hides her nest in the

grass, but her flight is far up in the heavens; she loves to lose herself in the beams of the sun, till you can tell where she is hovering, only by the gushing strains which she pours from on high. It is so with the true servant of God; in proportion as he lays self in the dust he will mount upon the wings of thankfulness to heaven; praise will fill his lips, because humility fills his heart. Were we more profoundly impressed with the sense of our own indesert, we should be more vividly impressed with the sovereign grace and overflowing goodness of our Father in heaven. Men naturally imagine that they have a claim to all they have—yea, and to a great deal more than they possess. They are prone to dwell on what they lack, rather than on what they enjoy: they compare themselves with those more favored, not with those more suffering than themselves. Can we wonder, then, that the world is filled with discontent, instead of thankfulness—with mourning, instead of praise? See the hateful effects of such a spirit terribly illustrated in the history of the haughty Haman. But the contrite heart of the believer reminds him that everything short of hell is mercy to a sinner; that a cup of cold water is far beyond his deserts. Take this as the

standard by which to measure our mercies, and what a tide of blessing is poured even on the meanest and most desolate of the human race !

Next to humility, there must be faith, in order to thankfulness. In the last chapter the attempt is made to show how the special providence of God ought, in all places and on all occasions, to be realized by the believer—in the counting-house as well as the sanctuary—in the ramifications of business as well as in the ordinances of worship. This minute recognition of divine interposition is essential, in order to the grateful acknowledgment of the hand of God in our mercies. The believer in chance, who ascribes everything to fortune or to fatality—how can he own the divine hand ? It must be seen to be trusted—it must be trusted to be glorified. Faith, therefore—faith discerning the Almighty hand within the machinery of second causes, as actuating, controlling, determining all—such a faith is the parent of unfailing praise.

Men of business, from the very nature of their occupations, are specially liable to lose the lively exercise of this practical faith. Their attention is of necessity largely absorbed in the measures which they must

adopt—the steps which they must take—the instrumentalities which they must employ, in order to success; so that they are apt to fall into a secular, material state of mind, which recognizes little beyond physical machinery; or at most, confines the providence of God to a kind of vague universal supervision, but does not trace it as interwoven with the details of life. The frequent consequence is a hardness of spirit, an unthankful, undevotional frame of heart, seldom in contact with God, craving little of his presence, and enjoying little of his peace. It is therefore of the utmost importance, ye men of engrossing occupation, that ye should accustom yourselves to realize the fact that God is just as much the agent where the most complicated machinery is employed, as where there is scarcely a shadow of instrumentality; that he is just as much the agent in giving “seed to the sower and bread to the eater,” by means of the sun, and the seasons, and the rain, and the gases of the earth, and the thousand other influences which concur to produce the harvest, as he was the agent when he took the five loaves and the few little fishes in his hand, and multiplied them as they were being distributed among the multitude. In the one case,

we call the agency creation ; in the other, providence—but is it not equally, in both, the finger of God? Were it otherwise, how could God govern the universe ? Did causes or creatures act independently of his control, where were the certainty of his purposes, or the stability of his throne ? O, could we but keep his hand in view as it is our privilege and duty to keep it, not all the apparatus of means—not all the efforts we employ in our diversified pursuits—not all our devotedness in the prosecution of our multitudinous objects, would make us either unmindful of our dependence, or ungrateful for his ceaseless care !

It is this practical faith that is needed in order to the perpetual acknowledgment of the goodness of God. Christians ought to beware how they ever ascribe their success to any skill or power of their own. They should take heed that they do not boast because they may have been vigorous and healthy ; or because their knowledge may have been clear, and their judgment prompt and sound ; or because, having laid their plans with consummate prudence, they carried them out with consummate address ; or because, having adopted every precaution against what the world calls accident and

chance, their precautions were crowned with the happiest result. What though all this be true, are they therefore to vaunt with the godless Assyrian, "My own hand hath got it me, and my wisdom, because I am prudent?" If we so boast, God will leave us to our self-sufficiency, and our prosperity will be our ruin. Rather than this, it had been better to have failed in every plan, to have been baffled in every speculation,—been beggared instead of being enriched.

The merchant has most reason to watch and pray in the day of his prosperity. It is easier to bear the ebb of disappointment than the flood-tide of success. The vessel that had weathered the storm sometimes springs the leak, or goes to pieces on the sunken rock, in the midst of the calm. So it has often been with the professor of godliness: after having borne the heavings and tossings of the tempestuous deep, he has made shipwreck on the glassy sea, amid the sunshine of gladness. We have most reason to watch when we think ourselves most secure. It was the beautiful remark of a poor Christian, when unexpected relief was given to her—"O! what a blessing it is to be poor, that one may see the hand of God so plain." How just the sentiment! The hand of God

is often concealed from the opulent in the very affluence of its gifts; while to the pious poor it is quite naked, though spreading their table but with bread and water. A dinner of herbs so seasoned with gratitude, is incomparably sweeter than a stalled ox eaten in selfish thanklessness. Think not that there is no danger of your being betrayed into such a spirit of unthankfulness. Remember the conduct of Hezekiah—the good King Hezekiah. When the blaspheming monarch of Assyria came up against Jerusalem and besieged it, and the Jewish prince was driven to sore extremity, then he sought his God right humbly, and spread the letter of his adversary before the mercy-seat, and cried aloud for deliverance; and the Lord hearkened unto his prayer, and the angel of the Lord went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians, till “they were all dead corpses.” And again, when he was in sickness, and nigh unto death, he turned his face to the wall, and wept and prayed and plead; and God had respect to his supplication, and added fifteen years to his life. But what was the result? At first, indeed, the king was filled with gratitude, and exclaimed, “The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day; the father to

the children shall make known thy truth ; all the day long will I sing thy praise !”—yet the sad record of his after days is, “ but Hezekiah rendered not again unto the Lord, according to the benefit done unto him ; for his heart was lifted up.” Is it not often so among ourselves ? Where are those who were sick, and called upon God in their sickness, and he restored them ? Have they rendered unto the Lord according to the benefit done unto them ? Christ said of the lepers whom he had healed, “ Were there not ten cleansed, but where are the nine ? ” In like manner we may say, Were there not ten raised from the bed of languishing, but where are the nine ? Were there not ten prospered in their plans, but where are the nine ? Were there not ten rescued from impending peril, but where are the nine ? Were there not ten who escaped the pestilence that walked in darkness, but where are the nine ? One, here and there, —sometimes the outcast and the stranger, sometimes the man we should have least expected,—returns to give glory to God. But where are the heartless, thankless multitude of recipients ?

However prevalent the sin of ingratitude, there is none God abhors with a deeper ab-

horrence, there is none which he will more assuredly punish. "He will not give his glory to another." Behold an instance. Who was more prosperous than the haughty Nebuchadnezzar? Yet what said he in the pride of his heart, when he had finished his matchless city? He said, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?" And what was the consequence? "The same hour the king was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen; and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws." God turned into a beast the man who was so brutish that he did not know, or so arrogant that he would not own, the hand that gave him all. But after he had been reduced to the lowest debasement, when at length his understanding returned unto him, then he "blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him that liveth for ever;" and "who doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth."

But it is good that we should be reminded of the benign influence which the spirit of continual acknowledgment of the hand of

God will exert upon us. One of its happiest effects will be to enable us to bear prosperity with meekness. If a man's success is ascribed to himself, he is sure to be intoxicated ; but if to God, that very success will humble him. Then is he able to carry the overflowing cup steadily, and to sip from it with safety ; then will he taste of it thankfully, but not drain it to the dregs. Receiving all as from God, the more he has the more will he be stimulated to faithfulness in his trust. He will realize that he is not the proprietor, but the steward ; that he is not the master, to do what he will with his own, but the servant, to trade with his Lord's money, that when he cometh and reckoneth with him, he may receive his own with usury. As every man expects his servant to be faithful to him in the use of his property, so should all feel that so God expects them to be faithful to him in the administration of that which is his. How effectually will this thought guard a man against being lifted up or carried away by what God intrusts to him. "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not," will be the language of the believer in the hour of his distress ; and "I am less than the least of all his mercies," will be his sen-

timent in the day of his fullness and prosperity. Such a man will be more humbled the more he is exalted; and the more God gives him and enables him to do, the more will he feel his unworthiness. Beautifully was this spirit exemplified in St. Paul: "I labored more abundantly than they all," says he, "yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me." So, again, "Behold I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." And after God had done such great things by him among the Gentiles, he said, "To me, who am less than the least of all saints, is *this grace* given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." All of grace—himself nothing.

The same spirit will make a man generous and large-hearted. Where God is forgotten, it is pitiful to see how riches harden the heart of him who gains them. Sometimes the man who was liberal while he was poor, becomes niggardly as he becomes wealthy. The tendency of gain is to nourish selfishness, if the hand that bestows it is overlooked; and the thirst of selfishness can never be slaked. The reservoir of the covetous never overflows. Recognizing no obligation, he yields to no claim. A man of this sort once said, "Others never give to me, why

should I give to others?" Infatuated man! is there none that ever gives to thee? What hast thou that thou hast not received? Has God given thee nothing? Who gave thee reason, life, success? Who prospered thy plans? Who gave thee power to get wealth? Who has kept thy dwelling safe? Who has warded off from thee a thousand calamities which have overtaken thy fellows? And art thou then indebted to none—has none a right to thy bounty? Wilt thou rob God? Shall he have no share of what is his own? Remember he cometh to reckon with thee, and then thou must account for "thy Lord's money."

Nor will the habitual acknowledgment of God's hand serve only to enlarge a man's heart in bountifulness; it will at the same time save him from self-complacency when he has done all; it will constrain him to ascribe to his Father in heaven both the ability and the disposition to give. If he lets his light shine before men, it is that they may see *his good works*, not *himself*; and glorify not *him*, but his *Father* which is in heaven. When he relieves the poor and needy, it is not in the fond notion of making God his debtor, but in grateful acknowledgment of the hand that has filled him with

plenteousness. Thus, by laying up less treasure for himself on earth, he becomes more rich toward God; for what a man freely gives, that is placed to his account in heaven. Keep back what is the Lord's, and in robbing him you rob yourself; give what is his out of love to him, and you secure it to yourself. Look to man for your reward, and you have it; but none shall await you above. Be rich for yourselves, and you shall be poor toward God; be poor toward yourselves, and you shall be rich toward him. It is, therefore, the lowly sense of the divine hand in all, which will effectually avert the temptation to which the generous giver is exposed, to trust in himself, and thus let the spirit of self-righteousness mar his charity, and bereave him of "the recompense of the reward."

How beautifully is the union of munificence and humility exemplified in the character of the man after God's own heart! When David, once a poor shepherd, became abundant in riches, they did not estrange his heart from God. No, his whole soul was on fire to devote his wealth to the erection of "an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob;" and when he had been warned that the glory of the work was reserved for his son, to which decision he submit-

ed without a murmur, he set himself at once to make the most magnificent preparations for the intended palace for God. Yet when he had done all—when he and his people, animated by his example, had provided a store of gold and precious things, unprecedented in costliness and amount, was the oblation tarnished by a single sentiment of self-satisfaction? Far from it. Hearken to his glorious language:—“Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the Lord: and David the king also rejoiced with great joy. Wherefore David blessed the Lord before all the congregation: and David said, Blessed be thou, Lord God of Israel, our Father, for ever and ever. Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thy hand is power and might: and in thy hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name. But who am I, and what is

my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? For all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding. O Lord our God, all this store that we have prepared to build thee a house for thine holy name, cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own."

What gracious words! Could language be more expressive of utter self-renunciation and simple acknowledgment of the grace of God, not only in the abundance which he had been able to present, but in the joyful willingness with which he had been endued to make the offering? Indeed, his thankfulness was greater for the willing mind than for the overflowing hand. Flesh and blood had not taught him this, but the Spirit of his Father in heaven. Far better to be rich in heart and poor in hand, than poor in heart and rich in hand. The mite of the poor widow, cheerfully given, is of far greater worth in heaven than the costliest gifts of the rich, if grudgingly bestowed.

Let us especially remark the transport of joy which filled the breast of the son of Jesse when he offered so willingly to the

Lord. It is an evidence of the genial influence which the spirit of gratitude and praise exerts on the happiness of him in whom it dwells. God has bound up our happiness in our duty ; and in no duty more than in that of thankfulness. Even when felt toward a human benefactor, how sweet the emotion of gratitude—except to a proud and selfish heart ! But if it be so in relation to an earthly friend, the exuberance of whose kindness may, because of the narrowness of his resources, oppress us ; how much more must it hold good in regard to that Father of mercies, whose gifts can never burden, because they are given out of an infinite fullness ! The obligation to love and adore him, is an obligation to be joyful and glad. Praise is the fragrance breathed from the flower of joy. He is happiest who is thankfulest. This lesson is taught us by the lower creatures themselves. Morose and unkindly animals express as little of enjoyment as they do of gratefulness by their snarling and growling sounds. The beasts and birds of night are rarely gladsome. But the lambs which sport and gambol in their green pastures, and the birds which in the early morning wake the echoes of the woodland with their songs, all tell most unmistakably that

they are happy. How much more, then, must it be the blessedness of man "to look through nature up to nature's God," and glorify the Giver in all his varied gifts!

It is a pleasant thing to be thankful. Nothing will more soothe our toils, beguile our cares, or animate us, amid all the hardships, emergencies, vexations and vicissitudes of life. The busy callings of life can be pursued in no other way so fitted to abate the wear and tear to which they subject men, as by carrying into the counting-house or the warehouse, the manufactory or the shop, this spirit of humble dependency and gratitude. What elasticity does it give to their minds —what cheerfulness to their labors! It brings down much of heaven to earth—fore-stalling angelic bliss. We are nearest to heaven, and likest to angels, when we are most absorbed in praise.

In blessing God, we are blessed of him. There are not a few men laden with the riches of this world, abounding in honors, "clothed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day;" yet full of restlessness, repining and discontent; satiated with pleasure, and weary of life. Why is it so with them? Because, instead of using the world, they abused it; instead of being

filled with thankfulness, they were tormented by covetousness. There are also others coarsely clad, poorly housed, and sparingly fed, who yet walk in sunshine and toil in peace—just because they season the dinner of herbs with thanksgiving, and beguile their daily task with praise. An unthankful man can never be happy; a thankful man cannot be wretched. It is not what a man has, but what he enjoys, that signifies to him. How beautifully just the sentiment of Addison! He says in one of his hymns—

“ And not the least a thankful heart,
That doubles all my store.”

Give such a one a crust of bread and a cup of water and he will relish them; while the selfish man will devour the stalled ox in bitterness. The lark will sing amid the wires of his cage, as well as in the sunny sky; and the loving Christian can raise his anthem in the dungeon, as well as in the sanctuary; in poverty, as well as in affluence; in the storm, as well as in the calm. Thankfulness will make the bed of anguish easy, and the yoke of labor light.

To crown all—no spirit will more adorn a Christian’s walk and conversation than a spirit of praise. Whether in the warehouse,

the counting-house, or the shop, an unthankful man of business dishonors God, and brings a reproach upon his service. Instead of a generous, genial, elastic mind, he exhibits a worried, repining, selfish temper. The world will lay this to the account of his religion. They will not be won by such an example. That man will reflect neither the beauty nor the blessedness of serving Christ. The garment of holiness is then most comely, when it is fastened by the golden clasp of thankfulness. When the Christian is thus adorned, men take knowledge of him that he has been with Jesus; they will be led to covet that happiness which the world can neither give nor take away. What shall I more say of the spirit of thankfulness? It is alike acceptable to the Creator and beseeming to the creature—the glory of angels and the element of heaven.

What a want there is throughout Christendom of the devout acknowledgment of the hand of God! What a want of it in our own privileged land! We perceive it in the councils of the nation—we note it in the debates of the senate—we trace it in the measures of our statesmen—we discover it in the tone of the public press—we detect it in the literature of the age—we discern it

alike in the transactions of business and in the concerns of domestic life. God grant the spirit of repentance to our land for her past delinquencies in this matter! and may he lead all classes in the community, senators, merchants, tradesmen, ministers, laborers—all, from the highest to the lowest, to recognize his hand in everything; lest he in righteous wrath “curse our blessings,” and take away from us the vineyard, whose fruits we have failed to render him in their season!

But what guilt has not each individual contracted in this matter? Can the reader say, “I have rendered to the Lord according as he has given to me; I have used his talents as a faithful steward; my praises have kept pace with his mercies?” Rather must not every one confess, I have rejoiced in his gifts rather than in himself, the giver; I have ascribed my success to my own wisdom, or resolution, or good fortune, (as the language of the world has it;) I have sought to glorify myself rather than my God; it is of the Lord’s mercies that I am not consumed. May the precious blood of Jesus wash away the stains of our unthankfulness; may his Spirit kindle on the altar of our hearts a never-ceasing sacrifice of praise!

CHAPTER VI.

HIS DETERMINATION OF PURPOSE.

PITIFUL was the sketch which Jacob on his death-bed drew of his eldest son: he said unto him, "Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel." Instability is fatal to excellence. No man can do anything great, who is not firm in his resolves, and constant in his undertakings. The ancient Greeks had an aphorism which is worthy of remembrance —"He is formidable who does *one* thing." The concentration of the energies of the soul, the faculties of the mind, and the efforts of the life, on some one master end, will give a tone, a coherence, and a grandeur to the character. A man must have a fixed design, or he will not have a steady course. As the instrument tuned to no key-note, so is the man whose spirit is strung to no commanding aim. In vain does the vessel launch forth from the harbor if she have no haven for which to steer, and no helm by which to shape her voyage; but let her obey her rudder well, and keep her point in view, and then, however she may be driven to and

fro by adverse winds and opposing currents, she will still return to her track, and urge her way to the longed-for port. The traveler will never reach his distant home unless he set that home before him—he may wander, but he cannot journey; he may seek, but he cannot find. Even so in the journey of life. A supreme end, even of an earthly kind, will give a certain force and coherence to character. The ambitious man, in the pursuit of the object which absorbs his soul, (evil though that object be when tested by God's truth,) imparts a sort of dark grandeur to his character, in consequence of the stern resolve with which he pursues his purpose. Now, he does it to obtain a corruptible crown; but what ought to be the master aim of every candidate of immortality? The catechism of the Church of Scotland furnishes the answer to this question excellently. "What," it is asked, "is the chief end of man?" and in reply it is said—"Man's chief end is to know, to serve, to glorify, and to enjoy God forever." Worthy, only worthy end of a being so created and endowed as man! If, then, such be our being's purpose, all who would live for immortality must live for the accomplishment of that design. Take a just

view of your life, and all is but dung and dross in comparison with your final acceptance with God. This is the object, the one object which you must enterprise, prosecute, and secure, in order that life may be a blessing to you, and immortality an enhancement of the blessing. What a work is before us! —a work for the achievement of which God “spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all”—a work for the attainment of which, the eternal Word, who “was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God, made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men”—a work for the accomplishment of which God incarnate “humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross”—a work for the accomplishment of which Jesus won his glorious resurrection and ascension, and became “head over all things to his church”—a work for the effectuation of which God the Holy Ghost is sent down by the Father and the Son into the souls of those that are saved, and dwells there, and works there, and carries on a new creation, and builds them up in holiness, and fits and fashions them for heaven—a work the dimensions and issues

of which it will require eternity to unfold, and eternity to comprehend !

In this work every ransomed child of man ought to be intensely engaged. His language should be—"I have a soul to be saved, a God to glorify, a Saviour to follow, a generation to serve according to the will of God, unnumbered adversaries to vanquish, an evil host to crucify, eternal life to win; whatever I neglect, these things must not be neglected—all must be subordinated to the things that belong to my peace." To all the impertinences of earth which would divert me, to all the cares of the world which would distract me, I will say, "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, while I leave it, and come down to you?" Such will be the concentrating power of faith in the soul of the believer; such the energy of that living principle which makes the things unseen, evident—the things hoped for, substantial—the things far off, contiguous—the things future, present. The mighty mastery of this power over all the energies of the inner man, is not to be overestimated. It serves to bring everything into its place—to give all things their true relative proportion; to make the little, little—and the great, great; the grand, grand—and

the insignificant, insignificant; the temporal, temporal—and the eternal, eternal; the human, human—and the divine, divine. It gives a man a “right judgment in all things.” It will sway his desires, and determine his choice. How illustriously we see this principle exemplified in the character of David! Surrounded with all the fascinations and seductions of his palace and his empire, he yet could exclaim—“*One* thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.” In him was thus fulfilled the promise made of God to his people by the prophet—“I will give them one heart and one way”—unity of purpose, resulting in uniformity of life. But if there be one human character which, more than all others, illustrates the glorious force of the high purpose which a commanding faith inspires, it is the character of the apostle Paul. From the hour when he tremblingly cried, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” to the hour when he said, “I am now ready to be offered;”—he was borne along by its resistless energy. Hearken to his own description of the singleness of his aim, and the indomitableness of his pursuit. “Yea doubtless,

and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Glorious absorption of the soul! Sublime supremacy of faith! No marvel that he could at last bear witness—"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the

righteous judge, will give me in that day." The man thus swallowed up in the high design of life, soars above the insignificant things, the laborious trifling, in which so many waste their energies. He bids away from him the allurements of the world, the blandishments of the flesh, and the enticements of the devil, when they would divert him from his lofty career, by the greatness of the work in which he is engaged. This he feels must be attended to, whatever is neglected—this secured, whatever is placed in jeopardy. All that would hinder him in working out his own salvation with fear and trembling, he will cast behind him; all that is conducive to that end, he will steadily pursue. Living according to this rule, gives an earnestness, a reality, a consistency to the life, which nothing else can impart. Time will never hang heavy on the hands of one so employed; an object of surpassing greatness, motives of constraining power, will never be wanting to him; the commonest duties will be invested with dignity, and the most secular occupations stamped with sacredness. Whatever his hand shall find to do, he will do it with his might. He will run for glory—he will toil for immortality.

Constancy of purpose gives weight and

force to Christian character. Men are influenced—wonderfully influenced by it. The world respects it, even though it envenoms their hatred. Bad men are overawed, and good men emboldened, by its influence. A fickle Christian belies his principles; a determined one adorns them. He ought to be firm as a rock who has God enthroned within him.

Neither will anything conduce more to a wholesome self-respect and self-confidence than this oneness of design. There is a self-respect and self-reliance which is no better than a proud delusion. But there is a self-respect, springing out of consciousness of singleness of purpose, and of integrity of heart, which, while it is consistent with all humility, is essential to holy boldness. Such was the spirit of St. Paul when he said—“Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience; that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.” Assured of the integrity of his heart, as evinced in the simplicity of his aim, he enjoyed a glorious liberty, a confidence which made him not ashamed.

How little of this sublime determination of Christian purpose is to be met with in the

Christian world! How often does the character change with the changing circumstances of life! How frequently do men borrow their tint from the light or shadow which falls upon them, instead of exhibiting the same unvarying color in the sunshine as in the shade! How many are “ever learning, and never coming to the knowledge of the truth!” Of multitudes it must be said, as St. Paul said of the Galatians, “I stand in doubt of you.” In these soft and silken days of lax profession, nothing is more needed in the Church than nerve and bone and sinew—vividness of conviction evinced in steadiness of career. Let there be more of this material in our piety, and the ungodly and the scoffing will acknowledge that God is among us of a truth; the world will bow before the power of the soldiers of the cross. But while the children of this world are all earnestness in pursuing their shadows, and we all heartlessness in pursuing our infinite realities, is it to be wondered at that the world should have an overmastering sway, and the Church exert but a feeble influence? Consistency is mighty; inconsistency, weak. The Christian ought to be staid. It is his prerogative to be independent of all things, because dependent on God alone. It is his

privilege to govern circumstances, rather than to be governed by them. It is his, not only to bring every imagination into captivity to the obedience of Christ, but to bring into captivity to that obedience all the vicissitudes of life, all the social influences to which he may be exposed, all the temptations by which he may be assailed. Serving one master, he should find that service perfect freedom ; free to obey, he should be free indeed.

Young men embarked on the waves of business, set your helm for the port of salvation ; steer according to the chart of God's word and by the polar star of faith ; urge on your way, fearless of consequences, regardless of sneers ! He is with you in your bark, who saved of old the little ship which was tossed on the sea of Galilee. He will keep you from foundering in the billows, or shivering on the rocks ; and will at last moor your vessel safely in the haven, where the "wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."

Firmness of purpose should distinguish the Christian in everything. As in the supreme, so in the subordinate concerns of life he should be steadfast. There are good men, true to the service of their Saviour, yet irresolute and fitful in their earthly pur-

suits. This is not as it ought to be:—the good man ought to be a pattern of steadiness in all things, whether in the counting-house or behind the counter, in the workshop or in the sanctuary, in transactions of business or in the endearments of friendship. It is not to the honor of his vocation if he is characterized by infirmity of purpose—if men cannot reckon on his behavior in the minutest things. Even in secular matters, a Christian should strive to be consistent, to aim at a character which is not a piece of patchwork, but a garment of the same weft and warp throughout. This gives weight—dignity—influence. Let him, on his fidelity to God, give no occasion for it to be said that the godly man of business is a fickle or an undiscerning man—that his religion spoils him for the engagements of life. Far from it! A Christian ought to be prescient in design—for Christianity clears the intellect; tenacious in purpose—for Christianity imparts firmness to the judgment; and steady in pursuit—because Christianity sustains the spirit.

Write, therefore, on your scene of occupation, O Christian! the heavenly rule—“Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.” Serve the Lord in your secular

concerns, and whatever your hand findeth to do you will do it with your might. The spring of your activity will always be elastic. How graceful has been the career of some of our Christian merchants! From the time that they entered on the duties of the counting-house, they walked as became the gospel of Christ; while they maintained the inner life of the soul amid all the distraction and bustle of business, they manifested that life in their decision of character, steadiness of purpose, serenity of spirit—their punctuality in all their engagements, and their exactitude in all their transactions. Steering for heaven, they followed one pole-star, and pursued one course. Such men are the lights of the exchange—the moral heroes of commerce. They adorn the Church, and win from the world a reluctant admiration.

The examples of such men should be emulated by the young men of the Church; to the rising race of Christian men of business we would commend its consideration. Let such especially heed the admonition of the Preacher: “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.” The path of toil is the path to excellence, and the law of diligence is the law of happiness. An indolent man cannot fail to be an unhappy man—a

diligent one can scarcely be miserable: such is the law of nature, and the law of nature is the law of God. Not only must plans be laid down; they must also be accomplished. To realize a design, is to gain fresh moral strength: to abandon an undertaking, is to impair self-reliance, and enfeeble the nerve of the soul. It is of vital concern, therefore, in the culture of our spirits—that most essential of all cultivation—that we should always “be zealously affected in a good thing.” There ought to be no blanks in life—when one undertaking is finished, let another be begun. The irons should be always in the fire. Let him that is not bound to toil for his bread, take heed not to convert this advantage into a snare. Rather let him be all the more diligent in doing good: “to whom much is given, of the same much will be required.” Neither let the man of business, who toiled devotedly in the counting-house or the manufactory, when he retires from business be less devoted in the prosecution of his heavenly calling, less earnest in “serving his generation according to the will of God.” The hope of doing good ought to animate more than all the hopes of successful speculation or accumulating gain. Zeal for God is urgently

needed. The great necessity of the Church is not money, but men. "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few." We want an earnest Church to make a happy world. Christians, and especially Christian men of business, have no right to live to themselves. "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." Let not such, then, provoke the startling question, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" Life is all too short for life's great work. We are not designed to be like the gay butterfly, that sports in the sunshine and then perishes; but like the thrifty bee, that flies to and fro, but it is to gather the sweet store which she treasures up against the winter season, and who, as a consequence, survives in the stormy day. We must settle it in our minds, wherever we go, whatever we do, each one for himself,—"IN ALL, THROUGH ALL, ABOVE ALL, I MUST WORK OUT MY OWN SALVATION. I must follow my Saviour's steps, and secure my Saviour's approval. A steward with certain talents committed to me, my one high aim must be to hear my Master say at last—'Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.'" May the

anticipated sound of these words be ever ringing in our consciences—be ever quickening us to run “with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.” May not our earthly concerns secularize us, but rather may we spiritualize them. Our worldly avocations must be converted into a heavenly discipline. They must exercise our faith, meekness, charity, truth, uprightness; so may we be strengthening the inner man by the toils of the warehouse, as well as by the devotions of the closet and the sanctuary.

Energy of faith is the spring of earnestness of life. When the things unseen mightily impress, and the love of Christ mightily constrains, then there will be a lofty decision of character: then will the world, with its impertinences, its blandishments, its vexations, and its artifices, be kept in its proper place. However it may beset or assail, whether it threaten or allure, it is effectually repulsed by the majestic reply—“I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease while I leave it and come down to you?” To those who are thus occupied, how appropriate is the address of the great

Apostle, himself the best example of this lofty determination of purpose—"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

CHAPTER VII.

UPRIGHTNESS IN DEALINGS.

THE perfection of a painting is its keeping. The perfection of a building is its architectural proportion and symmetry. Nothing can make amends for a fault in this respect. As it is in things material, so it is in things moral. The perfection of a character is its unity and congruity. Study the character of Him who presents to us the only spotless character that the world ever beheld—study the character of Immanuel, and you will find that its crowning excellency is its unity and harmony. In speaking of his servants we speak of their distinguishing graces; we cannot so speak in speaking of the Master. He had no distinctive virtues, for distinctive virtues are such as stand out beyond the proportion of the rest. But in him every virtue was so exquisitely balanced and adjusted, that you cannot say he was more just than true, or more true than charitable, or more charitable than intolerant of evil. In the character of Jesus everything is so symmetrical, that you may compare it

to the beautiful bow—that emblem of the covenant of grace—in which all the primitive colors melt into each other with such perfect harmony, that no one of them overshadows another, but all equally delight the eye. Now, just in so far as a follower of Christ attains to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, will he resemble his Lord in this perfection. He will not be simply a man of prayer, or simply a man of practical integrity; he will be both in lovely unison. He will be in the closet what he is in the market-place, and in the market-place what he is in the closet. He will be before God what he is before man—such, at least, will be his aim. He will never set up one class of duties in opposition to another, nor look upon the performance of a few as a counterpoise to the neglect of the rest. His aim and his effort will be, to “have respect to all” the commandments of God, from the least to the greatest—if we may presume to graduate precepts which are alike enjoined by the same sovereign authority. Sad is it when men who “name the name of Christ,” divorce what God has united; some speaking of themselves as evangelical, in contrast to being moral; and others as being moral, in con-

trast to being evangelical. Such antagonisms have no place in the economy of grace; they are the figments of human passion and prejudice. According to the glorious gospel, no man is truly moral that is not evangelical, and none honestly evangelical that is not truly moral.

From the root of grace, through the stem of faith, there stretch forth two main branches; the one the love of God, the other the love of our neighbor. From these two shoot out and depend all the ramifications of obedience. Where the one is not, neither is the other; and where the one is found, you may be sure the other is not wanting. How beautifully were they combined in the character of Cornelius! "His prayers and his alms came up for a memorial before God;" there was devotion toward God, there was bountifulness toward man.

We trace the same beautiful combination in the character which we are endeavoring to portray in these pages; the character of him who is preëminently a man of faith and piety. We have in the foregoing chapters explored the secrets of his closet; we have penetrated into the recesses of his soul; we have examined the deep spring of all the energy and magnanimity of his career; we

have seen how he walks and communes with God. But he is a man of probity and charity, no less than of piety and prayer; and we delight especially to contemplate the benign influence of his devotional spirit, and the living efficacy of his godly fear, as manifested in all the diversified duties of secular life: now sustaining him under every difficulty; now emboldening him against every assailant; now securing him from every seduction.

No topic can be more practical or more pertinent to a commercial community than the moral relations of pecuniary transactions. If the sins that easily beset men vary according to the circumstances that surround them, the sins that will most easily beset mercantile men will be the sins to which they are specially exposed by their mercantile circumstances. It is, therefore, but reasonable to presume that, in a community where every man is in some degree a trafficker, trespasses against the strict law of uprightness will be peculiarly prevalent. Consequently, the avoidance of such offenses will constitute one of the clearest evidences of the sincerity of our godliness; and the commission of them, one of the surest signs that we have no religion of the heart. For

if any one wishes to apply a touchstone to character, let him take this as the most searching—the exercise of those graces which a man is most tempted to neglect, and the eschewal of those iniquities which a man is most tempted to indulge. He who can stand this test, is sterling in the sight of God.

In treating so appropriate a subject, it may be needful to enter into more than ordinary minuteness of detail. Nor should it be deemed a descent from the dignity and solemnity of our theme to endeavor to carry home that “commandment which is exceeding broad” into all the ramifications of commercial transaction.

We will, then, first of all, lay down some of the great principles which ought to govern the Christian in his mercantile career. We shall then strive to point out some of the deviations from these principles which are the most plausible, and therefore the most perilous. We shall afterward show how important it is to cleave unswervingly to the path of integrity and truth, despite of every enticement, and in defiance of all that the world may say or do. And let it not be thought that these considerations refer to extensive capitalists only—to leading mer-

chants and manufacturers. They are no less designed for subordinates than for principals—for the servant than for the master. They bear alike on all—on the faithful in little, as well as on the faithful in much; on the unjust in little, as well as on the unjust in much. It is not the amount of the gain of injustice that constitutes the sin; it is the deviation from integrity in which the transgression lies.

The first principle by which a Christian tradesman ought to regulate his transactions is—To love his neighbor as himself. “Love is the fulfilling of the law;” “love worketh no ill to his neighbor;” therefore, love secures effectually the accomplishment of the commandment. To love our neighbor as ourselves, is to have the same regard and affection for him that we cherish for ourselves; so that *his* interest, *his* well-being, *his* success, shall be dear to us as *our own*; and *his* sorrows, *his* losses, *his* distresses, *his* disappointments, shall be felt by us as even *our own*. Will you say—“This is a standard utterly beyond our attainment?” If it is, indeed, beyond our attainment, it ought not to be beyond our aim—nay, it is a standard which every Christian must strive to reach. We must not lower the precept to

our defective attainments, but labor to bring up our attainments to the precept. The authority which binds the injunction upon us, forbids our attempting to relax its stringency. He that said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength," said also, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The question, therefore, is not what we can attain, but what God requires. Perfection must be our goal, though imperfection will be the present result of our efforts. We may love that to which we cannot yet attain, and loathe that from which we cannot yet get wholly free. Ceaselessly ought we to struggle to counteract that selfishness which was the chief cause of the fall, and which so powerfully serves to keep us fallen. We must show no mercy to that desire, to make everything contribute to our own pleasure and advantage irrespectively of the interests of others, which has taken such root in our heart. We must deny ourselves that we may benefit others. Self-love must be supplanted by the love of our neighbor. Benevolence alone can subdue the idolatrous love of self.

The next great principle which ought to pervade all our intercourse with our fellows

is—"Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." What condescension in the great Lawgiver, that he should not only give us the details of our duty, but that he should also give us sundry summaries of his will—summaries so plain that the simplest reason may understand them, and so compendious that the feeblest memory may retain them! As in commerce an immense sum is sometimes represented by a small note; so in the Scripture we frequently find a code of morals condensed into a sentence. Thus it is in the golden maxim on which we are dwelling. Only let a man carry out this rule with an honest conscience in his daily transactions, and he will seldom be puzzled with points of casuistry. As on no occasion can it be inapplicable, so on no occasion, if fairly used, can it mislead. No doubt, indeed, it is often perverted and misinterpreted. The poor man distorts it, when he holds that it binds the rich man to give him all that he may choose to ask; and the rich misunderstand it, when they set it aside as hyperbolical and impracticable. But understand the rule in its two-fold bearing, and you will perceive that it acts like the governor or fly-wheel in one of our ingenious pieces of machinery—it maintains

the balance between antagonistic forces. Let a man study and cherish that contentment and moderation of mind which will lead him to expect from others only what is fair and reasonable, and then others will have no right to demand from him anything more than what is right and equitable. The precept is designed to control our personal desires, as well as to regulate our dealings with our neighbor. Exorbitant expectation violates the canon, even as it is broken by unrighteous dealing. This exquisite principle, therefore, has a two-fold action. It tells upon a man by moderating his wishes, no less than by influencing his treatment of those with whom he has to do; so that he has only to conform to the rule in its double bearing, and he may steer by it, as by an infallible compass, through all the intricacies of social intercourse.

In fulfilling one's duty toward his neighbor, care must be used to cherish a further principle of paramount moment—to be faithful in the little, even as in the great—to shrink from the lighter, as well as from the darker shades of dishonesty. He who despises little things, will fall by little and little. The guilt of transgressing is to be measured by the willfulness, rather than by the degree

of transgression. He who deliberately offends on a small scale, only lacks boldness or opportunity to commit a more flagrant offense. The poor man who defrauds his master of the time for which he is paid, or who uses the property of his employer wastefully, betrays the germ of the grossest dishonesty. On the other hand, the master who, while ostentatiously honorable in his transactions with his equals, takes stealthy advantage of his servants, and, instead of giving them "that which is just and equal," screws them down to the uttermost in their wages, or exercises his ingenuity in contriving pretexts for abatements from their gains —this man adds hypocrisy to his fraudulency. In truth, the best test of godly integrity is the little, not the great—if a man be faithful in the former, he can hardly be unfaithful in the latter. He who shows his principle in avoiding grosser, while he indulges in slighter deviations from uprightness, proves his principle to be earthly, not heavenly—taught by the fear of man, not by the love of God. The Lord estimates the guilt of the trespass, not by the magnitude of the act, but by the defiance of his authority which it involves.

Profane men have dared to sneer at the

fact, that man lost paradise, and incurred eternal death, by partaking of the forbidden fruit; and they have presumed to arraign the punishment as utterly disproportionate to the crime. Yet, in very deed, the smallness of the temptation may be regarded as the gauge of the depth of the faithlessness and rebellion of the creature in disobeying his Creator. The slightness of the inducement to violate the prohibition, enhances instead of alleviates the turpitude of the violation. The more gentle the test of loyalty, the more aggravated the heinousness of disloyalty. But if God doomed a world to death for what some deem a small transgression—what shall be thought of the man who makes light of petty dishonesties, and how shall he stand before His judgment-seat who has said, “Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all?”

Such, then, are the principles which must constitute the platform of the Christian's everyday course and conversation, if he would approve himself in His sight, whose he is, and whom he delights to serve. Let us next endeavor, with all faithfulness, to consider some of the less obvious deviations from these principles which pass current in

the mercantile world, amid all its boasted morality.

How common is it for men to defraud society by idleness and self-indulgence ! An indolent man is not simply a negative character, he is a positive injury to others. He robs the community of its rights, and God of his service. The “slothful servant” is denounced as a “wicked servant”—the man who hid his lord’s money as having wronged his master. The idle man is a cumberer of the ground ; he wastes the soil where a fruitful tree might flourish. Yet how seldom is slothfulness reputed a crime !

Another prevalent, widely ramified, and subtly-disguised class of dishonesty, is that which is either committed, or connived at, by public bodies. What, commonly, more vague and elastic than a corporate conscience ? Men will do and sanction in partnership what they would recoil from in their individual capacity—as though shared responsibility were diminished responsibility, or guilt incurred with a crowd could be cloaked by the crowd. But what saith the Scripture ? “Every man shall bear his own burden ;” “so, then, each one of us shall give account of *himself* to God.” And as men will deal in bodies as they would not

individually, so will they deal *with* bodies as they would not with individuals. How much equivocation, chicanery, and subterfuge, are practiced in relation to the claims of civil *government*? By many, to elude those claims is thought to be at most a venial fault. Yet God himself has vindicated the rights of the community. "Tribute to whom tribute is due;" "custom to whom custom," is his decision. The very same law that binds a man not to cheat his neighbor, forbids him to cheat the commonwealth which throws its shield around his life and property. "The powers that be are ordained of God;" and he who instituted the powers ordained the means for their maintenance. Yet, obvious as is the duty of submitting cheerfully to the impositions of the state, you cannot be conversant with the ways of the world, and not know how extensively taxes are evaded, how frequently false returns of property are made, how artfully the excise and the customs are in numberless instances defrauded. You are aware with what skill and adroitness some who thus practice deceit contrive to elude detection; while others, glorying in their shame, will even plume themselves on the cleverness they have displayed in cheating the

revenue. Cleverness! It is a cleverness from beneath.

Contemplate another field of fraud less startling, and therefore more insidious than the former. By selfish extravagance, or rash speculations, what numbers subject themselves to liabilities which their resources do not warrant, or plunge into debts which they have no prospect of discharging! It is not uncommon for the commercial world to be shaken, convulsed, dislocated, by the gambling spirit which seems periodically to take possession of it, impelling men to stake all upon a throw. In their haste to be rich, they leave principle and prudence behind them. Bent on their own enrichment, they have no regard for the interests of others. No doubt there is a wholesome enterprise in business which ought not to be discouraged, and to which a certain range and latitude must be accorded; but when that range and latitude intrench on the rights of others, they intrench, however stealthily, on the law of God. It is not enough that a man's intentions are honest—his measures must be prudent. While integrity actuates, wisdom must restrain. I do not deny that a man of integrity may be unsuccessful in his plans, that insolvency

may overtake him unawares ; he may find himself involved in difficulties which he could not avert, and embarrassments which he could not foresee ; and he may shine all the more brightly by his conduct in such circumstances. But when a man launches out into speculations far beyond the margin of his capital, or when he indulges in a style of living which he has no income to justify, then at once is he making shipwreck of uprightness, he is sacrificing others to himself. "Owe no man anything," is as much a divine precept as "Thou shalt not steal," or, "Thou shalt do no murder." Fearful is the amount of inconsistency which, when tried by this standard, many who name the name of Christ betray ; by reason of whom "the way of truth is evil spoken of," and the gainsayer is hardened in his unbelief. "Let us judge ourselves" in these things, "that we be not judged of the Lord." "Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that which he alloweth."

Then, again, how diversified the deceptions practiced in trade for the purpose of taking advantage of the purchaser ! Inferior articles are made to wear a superior appearance ; old and damaged goods are vamped up, and glossed over, that they may pass for new ;

domestic manufactures are sold as foreign; the names of certain makers are attached to articles which they never made; false representations are given of the cost of produce, or the state of the markets; the unpracticed dealer is charged more than the accomplished trafficker; prices are regulated by what can be obtained, rather than by the real worth of that which is sold. These things are the curse and canker of business—a moral leprosy which taints the community. How hardly shall a faithful tradesman keep himself pure! How great watchfulness he requires, that he may not be “partaker of other men’s sins!”

On the other hand, how frequently will the buyer avail himself of the necessities of the seller; force him to forego his legitimate profit, or disparage and depreciate his goods, in order that he may beat down their price. It is still as it was in the days of the wise man: “It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer; but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth.”

And what shall we say of the various ways in which articles of merchandise are adulterated? The production of spurious and counterfeit goods forms an extensive branch of manufacture. And to such a

pitch has this species of fraud been carried in some departments, that a strictly honest man often finds it most difficult to stand his ground against such fraudulent competition. In all this, a two-fold guilt is incurred—the guilt of dishonesty, and the guilt of deceit. To cover the violation of the eighth commandment, the ninth is tacitly, if not expressly, violated. A lie is acted, if it be not uttered; and an acted lie is at least as bad as a spoken lie. Nor is this all; the subordinates are usually implicated in the guilt of the principals; indeed, the latter will sometimes require the former to do what they would shrink from doing themselves. Pitiful subterfuge! What a man does by another he does himself; yea, and such employers are far more criminal than the agents whom they employ. Not content with serving Satan themselves, they become his allies in enslaving their dependents. Not satisfied with selling their own consciences, they traffic in the consciences of others. As though it were not enough to practice deceit, they become manufacturers of deceivers. These things are too notorious to be denied, too flagrant to be passed over in silence. Nor is the dark catalogue of social injustice yet filled up. How often do masters oppress

the servant and the hireling in their wages ! Instead of "giving them that which is equal and right," they strive to beat and screw down their hire to the uttermost, taking advantage of their necessities. Yet if there be one kind of fraud more dastardly, dishonorable, and aggravated than another, it is that which wrests from the laboring man the fair recompense of the sweat of his brow—the very price of his sinews, his flesh, and his blood. "The Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified." Is it not notorious, that in too many instances wages are the first, instead of the last, thing to be retrenched when times are unfavorable ? Are not employers, with some honorable exceptions, far more ready to lower wages when trade is bad, than to raise them when trade is good ? How seldom do the workmen share proportionably in the prosperity of their master ? Hardest and meanest of all is it, when, as is sometimes the case, under the pretext that his work has been damaged or deficient, heavy abatements of the remuneration of his toil are forced on the hapless artisan, who has no alternative but to submit to the wrong, or to be thrown out of employment. At all events, little hope can the poor and

the weak have in contending against the rich and the strong. As a consequence, there often follows a fearful retaliation ; the work-people, smarting under unmerited imputations, and goaded on by a sense of wrong, take the law into their own hands, and fancy that they are warranted to do what they have been falsely charged with doing, and are justified in taking stealthily what they ought in fairness to receive. Thus, injustice on the one side begets injustice on the other. But it must not be forgotten, that however guilty the dependent who has in this way been disciplined into dishonesty, sevenfold heavier is his guilt who made him dishonest. How would all this be averted if only and always the master were to deal with the servant, and the servant with the master, as each would desire to be dealt with by the other, were their relation inverted !

Much shade might still be added to this dark picture, were we to explore the ramified injustice and unfaithfulness which so often disgrace trusteeships and executorships. What sad scenes and stories here crowd on the mind—the interests of the helpless and dependent cruelly neglected, the confidence which friendship reposed in the undeserving shamefully betrayed. O !

how do the sighs of the widow and the tears of the fatherless cry, and their “cries are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth!” Fearful must be the retribution which awaits those who, instead of defending the cause of the fatherless and widow, take advantage of their weakness to bereave and oppress them. But I will not pursue this melancholy train of illustration any further. Enough has been said to remind all who will give heed of the perils which beset our social relationships, and to warn them not to “walk according to the course of this world.”

Christian reader, let me remind you how beautiful and blessed would be the state of society if all this were reversed—if, instead of the sordid maxim of the worldling holding true, “Where you find a man’s interest there you will find the man,” it could be said universally, “Where you find a man’s duty there you will find the man.” Why should it not be so with us all? Secular interest itself demands it at our hand. Honesty is the best policy. In the long run, the upright man will ordinarily be the successful man. Or, if he be not prosperous here, it is because God has better things in store for him hereafter, and trains him by earthly discipline for an enduring and undefiled in-

inheritance. At all events, he will enjoy the melody of the testimony of a conscience void of offense—a melody which can gladden the home of guileless penury, but for lack of which the costly mansion of fraud will have no true gladness. “Better a dinner of herbs,” the fruit of integrity, than a “stalled ox,” imbibited by guilt: yea, and often even in this world God sets his brand on the gains of dishonesty. It is no uncommon thing to see wealth which had been doubtfully accumulated, melt away like snow before the summer’s sun. Or else to find, that the usurious owner had heaped up riches and could not tell who should gather them; for, either he leaves no descendants to inherit his wealth, or else his posterity squander in profligacy the stores for which he had sacrificed his conscience and his soul. Far more frequently than the heedless notice, is it thus made manifest, that “doubtless there is a God that judgeth in the earth.”

A few more practical suggestions must close this chapter. How vain his expectation who hopes, by meeting the requirements of the law, to stand acquitted before God! Tried even by his favorite table—that which enjoins his duty toward man—is he not daily adjudged to be guilty? Can he plead

that he has always from his heart loved his neighbor as himself, or done in all things to others as he would have others do to him? Is it possible for self-love so to blind him, that he should venture so to plead? But if he cannot justify himself in relation to the law as bearing upon his conduct toward his fellow-creatures, how can he hope to justify himself in relation to the law as bearing upon his conduct toward his Creator? Surely, then, "by deeds of the law shall no man living be justified." Surely, "by the law is the knowledge of sin." Surely, "the law is a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith;" for "he is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Surely, none can stand before the Judge of quick and dead, except that Judge have "blotted out as a thick cloud his transgressions, and as a cloud his sins."

At the same time it must never be forgotten, that there will be repentance toward God whenever there is "faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Fruits meet for repentance will follow. Where this is the case, he that has done wrong will strive to do so no more; and where he can make reparation, reparation will be made. "Behold, Lord,"

said the penitent and believing Zaccheus, "the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." Then said Jesus, "This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham"—a son not only after the flesh but also "after the Spirit," because possessed of the living faith of Abraham—a faith fruitful in all good works. The Christian must aim high. He ought not to come down to the standard of the world, but strive to attain to the standard of Christ, remembering the declaration, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people." "What, then, do ye more than others?" In the counting-house or on the exchange, in the manufactory or in the workshop, let men be compelled to "take knowledge of him that he has been with Jesus"—not by much talking about religion out of place, but by his acting on its principles and carrying out its precepts in all his dealings and relations. The ordinary business of life should be penetrated with the spirit of the gospel. "Be not partakers of other men's sins." "Keep yourselves pure." Our inquiry should be, not what is customary, but what is right. In pursuing such a

course one may have to suffer from unscrupulous competition, he may have to forego tempting advantages, he may see no prospect of success—but let him not be anxious. Let him bear in mind what the prophet answered the king of Judah when he asked, “But what shall we do for the hundred talents which I have given to the army of Israel?” “The Lord is able to give you much more than this.” So ought men to reckon that He whom they serve can give them manifold more than they lose for his sake, even in this world, and in the world to come life everlasting. Above all, let each realize that as it would profit him nothing to gain the whole world and lose his own soul, so it will disadvantage him little, if he lose the whole world and save his own soul. May our treasure be in heaven!

“Let integrity be the guide of your life.” “If riches increase, set not your heart upon them;” if they diminish, let not your heart be troubled. How much better is honorable poverty than dishonorable opulence! Woe to the “men of the world, who have their portion in this world;” but blessed are they who are “as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.”

There are few characters more honorable or more useful than that of the Christian man of business, who sets an example of truth, of uprightness, and of diligence; and who labors to have a conscience void of offense toward God and man. Mercantile men of this description are the salt of the commercial world, and "the substance" of the nation. God grant that the number of such men may be greatly multiplied! and may the reader be of that number!

CHAPTER VIII.

FORTITUDE IN DUTY.

By our Christian baptism we are formally united to Christ; and among the great designs of that holy ordinance as to ourselves, is that it should serve for a “token that we should not thereafter be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner against sin, the world, and the devil, and to continue Christ’s faithful soldiers and servants unto our lives’ end.” As professed Christians, therefore, we are called to fight as soldiers, as well as to obey as servants. Indeed, we cannot do this without doing the other also; for no man can serve God in this wicked world unless he contend in order that he may obey. But in a soldier there is no quality so shameful as cowardice, and no excellency so essential as courage. A cowardly soldier has no right to be in the army—a cowardly Christian has no right to be enrolled under the standard of the Captain of our salvation. Hence it is, that when St. Peter enumerates the chief graces which we are to give all

diligence to attain, he places fortitude next to faith: "Giving all diligence," says he, "add to your faith *virtue*,"—the primitive sense of the word employed in the original is *valour*; even as in the Latin tongue, and in our own language, the word *virtue* originally signified courage—an expressive fact, which indicates how closely the two qualities are allied. The Spirit of God thus proves, that the next thing to believing in Christ in order that we may be saved, is boldnesss through Christ to avow that belief; for "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." If there be not, therefore, the courage to avouch Christ with the lip and in the life, the seal and superscription of the faith that saves is lacking.

Mingling, as the Christian man of business necessarily does, in scenes of secular distraction; brought into contact, day by day, with worldly and ungodly men; occupying his business in the midst of those who deride his principles and lie in wait to betray him; breathing an atmosphere charged with false sentiments, false maxims, false feelings,—how much he needs to add to his faith, *virtue*,—to see to it that

while he is “not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord,” he is also “strong and of good courage,” fighting manfully under the banner of his Lord, and confessing him before men.

The nature of holy courage must be analyzed, in order that we may not misunderstand its elements. It is not that natural bravery which belongs to some men constitutionally. This quality, if you examine it, resolves itself into little more than strength of nerve and robustness of animal spirits. It is found largely among our soldiery, and, in a thousand instances, apart from Christian principle. It is rather the bravery of the lion than the bravery of the mind and the man. There is, however, a courage of a far higher order—that which springs from a sense of honor, from a proud disdain of what is mean and pusillanimous—which dreads a spot more than a wound—a reproach more than a calamity. In this there is much that is specious and lovely, yet is it after all a plant of earthly growth—fair, but without abiding root. This is the heroism which captivates the world. They can appreciate; they can admire it. They make it their standard; they talk rapturously of heroes; they well-nigh

worship them. But, after all, such heroism, when weighed in the balances of Holy Scripture, is found utterly wanting. It is lacking in universality of influence—it is lacking in personal subjugation. Hence it is by no means uncommon to find a man who can conquer in battle, conquered himself in the struggle with his own nature ; to find the victor vanquished, and the warrior who led others into captivity taken captive by his own corruptions. Some of the most valorous have been the most depraved ; and some who dragged their enemies at their chariot-wheels, have themselves been dragged through the mire of pollution by their own appetites and passions. The history of the world furnishes a thousand proofs that the hero of the battle-field is not always a hero in private life, and that worldly honor cannot save a man from sensual bondage. As the stream cannot rise higher than its fountain, neither can a moral quality rise higher than its principle. Earthly valor cannot raise a man above the earth ; but the courage of a Christian springs from the fear of God, from “seeing him who is invisible,” from realizing his omnipotent sovereignty, from prizes his favor more than life, and dreading his displeasure more than death.

Hence the soldier of Christ is fearless to do right, fearful to do wrong—afraid to sin, but not afraid to suffer. He dares not deviate from honesty, but he dares encounter loss for being honest; he dares not tell a lie, but he dares to suffer for speaking the truth; he dares not “make a mock at sin,” but he dares set at naught the mockery of sinners; he dares not “follow the multitude to do evil,” but he dares to follow the commandments of God, though the whole world should threaten or assail. This exalted grace is exercised not more in withstanding the evil that is without, than in overcoming the evil that is within; it displays itself most decisively in the believer’s warfare with self; its noblest achievements are achievements on the battle-field of the heart. Its exploits are often unknown save to God and conscience. Its triumphs are chronicled in the archives of heaven.

The need and scope for this virtue amid the ordinary occupations of life, claim special attention. People are apt, when we speak of courage, to think of battle and of peril; and when we speak of fortitude, to think of bonds and imprisonments—the confessor’s tortures and the martyr’s stake. But heavenly heroism, whether it be active or

passive, is constantly called into play where the world has no conception that it can be exercised. It is essential in order that a man may do the will of God—for to do that will is to master his own will ; and in order that he may “be spiritually minded, which is life and peace,” he must mortify “the carnal mind, which is enmity against God.” He, therefore, that will be a follower of God must take up arms against himself ; he must enter into habitual conflict with his own nature. The very terms of his enlistment under the Captain of his salvation are, “to deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Christ.” But to do this, to crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts, to keep the body under, and to bring it into subjection—holding it down, as the wrestler does his antagonist when he has got him undermost, despite of all his spasmodic struggles to rise—yea, and not to wrestle against flesh and blood only, but “against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places ;” to “quench all the fiery darts of the wicked,” and face all the artillery of hell—this requires a mighty moral valor indeed : a courage, how far surpassing all the daring of

the earthly warrior! “He that ruleth his own spirit, is greater than he that taketh a city;” and he that conquers himself, than he that conquers a kingdom. It was finely said by Richard Cecil, that “an humble Christian, battling against the world, the flesh, and the devil, is a greater hero than Alexander the Great.” No doubt he is in the sight of angels. His record is on high. “He shall be a pillar in the temple of his God.” Meanwhile, however, how protracted often, how wearying the warfare! There must be no truce—no suspension of hostilities. It will last while life lasts—it can be finished only when we finish our course, and “enter into the joy of our Lord.”

Then, again, it requires a courageous spirit to have respect to all God’s commandments. They are very short, but they are “exceeding broad.” They extend to every thought, and word, and work—to every movement of the inner, and every act of the outer man. The law of God is like the atmosphere we breathe—it encompasses us always and everywhere. But always and everywhere to strive after conformity to it—at whatever cost, risk, sacrifice, or suffering—what holy intrepidity does this demand! Well might Joshua, when he was taking leave of the

hosts of the Lord, say to them, “Be ye therefore very courageous”—for what purpose? To vanquish their enemies?—to root out the remnant of the Canaanites? No; but “to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses.” Courage was required by them to obey rather than to fight; to subdue themselves rather than to discomfit the Hittite and the Perizzite. Let them do the former, and the latter would follow. Look at the history of Israel, and you will find it a commentary on this truth. Never were they faithful to the Lord, but their enemies fled; never were they unfaithful to him, but their enemies triumphed over them. “The battle is not to the strong.” Surrounding Jericho, at God’s command the walls fell prostrate, without a sword having been drawn or an arrow shot—going against Ai, when they had provoked the Lord to anger, they were smitten down before the men of that insignificant city.

It is further requisite that the servant of Christ should be of good courage in order that he may overcome the world—in order that he may not be “conformed to” it, but “transformed by the renewing of his mind.” He is not of the world, even as his Master

is not of the world. Jesus "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from the present evil world." It is true the religion of Christ does not lie in singularity; yet, even in this land, we are strangers to living Christianity unless we are singular; for the multitude of those among us are as truly of the world as are the pagans in heathen lands, who do not even know that name. Hence, those who have the mind that was in Christ, cannot fail to be "a peculiar people" in the midst of Christendom, even as they would be in the midst of Paganism. The features which distinguish them from those by whom they are surrounded, may not be so palpable in the one case as in the other; but they are not on that account less real. The children of God, wherever they dwell, must, in spirit and character, "come out from among" the world "and be separate." They dare not "walk according to its course," else they would walk "according to the prince of the power of the air." "They are crucified to the world, and the world to them." Their path is narrow, and therefore their fellow-travelers are few. They must welcome the world's frown rather than court its smile. "If they were of the world, the world would love its own; but because they

are not of the world, for Christ has chosen them out of the world, therefore the world hateth them." If we bear his image, we shall share his "reproach." For, though some think that the beauty of virtue must captivate, and the loveliness of holiness disarm all—yet when He who was virtue embodied and holiness impersonated, walked the world, instead of being captivated by the beauty of his holiness, and ravished by the loveliness of his virtue, the men of the world hated him, and mocked him, and scourged him, and buffeted him, and spat upon him, and crowned him with thorns, and crucified him. Such was the world's appreciation of the excellency of virtue, and the perfection of holiness! And if they persecuted Christ, will they not persecute his people?—if they called the master of the house Beelzebub, will they not much more call them of his household? The more closely we resemble our Lord, the more shall we be honored with the world's enmity. The "offense of the cross" hath not ceased. If we escape the offense, it must be by hiding the cross. Strange, that while Mahomedans and Pagans glory in their shame, and never think of blushing to own their superstitions—Christians should

so often be ashamed of their glory! Mysterious evidence that the cross is of God! Paganism never provokes the enmity of the carnal mind; it is the cross that stirs its antipathy. Here, therefore, is a wide field for Christian courage. To confess Christ before men, to glory in his cross, to identify ourselves with his people—this is hard to flesh and blood—harder to many than to face the cannon's mouth. “The fear of man bringeth a snare;”—the fear of his frown, his contempt, his ridicule, his scorn—how often does this false feeling ensnare the soul! The vaunted valor of the world betrays its hollowness here. He who will rush on the battle's edge, dares not face the sneers of fools. In defiance of conscience and the fear of God, he will stand to murder or to be murdered, lest he should be branded as a coward. What pusillanimous bravery! What dishonorable honor! In noble contrast was the spirit of that man of holy intrepidity—“Colonel Gardiner;” who, when challenged to a duel, answered majestically, “You know I am not afraid to fight, but I am afraid to sin.” Still more sublime was the conduct of another illustrious soldier, who—when a rash and insolent young man, after having challenged him in vain for the

purpose of provoking him to fight, first went so far as to strike him, and then spit in his face—calmly took out his handkerchief, and wiping his cheek, said solemnly, “ Young man, if I could as easily wipe your blood from my conscience as I do this from my face, I would chastise your insolence.” No marvel that the youth, stung to the quick by such magnanimity, fell on his knees and craved forgiveness. That was a glorious victory! The Christian hero, by conquering himself, conquered his enemy; so fulfilling the precept, “ Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.” The world’s heroes overcome evil with evil, and therefore are vanquished; the Christian hero overcomes evil with good, and therefore is more than conqueror.

And let it not be supposed that, in the daily and common-place pursuits of business, there is no scope for the exercise of this grace. In its lowlier and less impressive, but not less important exercises, it is frequently called into play. Occasions for its manifestation occur where the unbelieving never perceive them. For instance, a commercial man has to do with men who, in the transactions of business, adopt certain principles, and pursue a certain line of policy,

which, though consistent with the world's standard of morality, is not in harmony with the high demands of scriptural integrity. In such a case, there can be no doubt what path a Christian must choose; but in choosing it, he will not only have to forego a seeming advantage, but he will have also to provoke the dislike, if not the censure, of those whom by such a choice he tacitly rebukes. He will be thought, if he is not called precise, puritanical, wanting in spirit and enterprise, never likely to succeed in the world. Here moral courage is brought into requisition, in order to embolden him to encounter resentment and contempt, to stem the current of custom, and brave the strictures of the oracles of trade. Or perhaps he is a servant, accustomed to submit to his employer, dependent upon him for his daily bread. He is required to act deceitfully, or to concur in dishonesty, or to profane the day of holy rest. His situation is at stake if he refuse. Yet he must "not be a partaker of other men's sins;" he must obey God rather than man. Now, therefore, the fortitude of faith must intervene; he must trust in God, cleave to that which is right, and commit the issue to his hands. Or it may be that his ordinary avocations compel

him to mingle with profane, impure, and licentious men, whose mouths are full of uncleanness and ungodliness: he breathes a tainted atmosphere, like that of Sodom and Gomorrah. What courageous resolution it requires to keep himself, like Lot in Sodom, undefiled by the pollution which encompasses him, to own Christ where all deny him, and glory in his cross where all pour contempt on his name! What but a strength made perfect in weakness can keep him pure amid surrounding impurity, reverential amid surrounding profaneness, truthful amid surrounding deceit?

But he may be called (*some are called, multitudes have been called*) to severer tests of holy fortitude than these. "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Few, however, have in these latter days drunk deeply of the bitter cup. But there is reason to think that it is filling again for the faithful. The indications of prophecy and the aspects of Christendom seem alike to betoken a return of fiery trial for the righteous.

Already on the continent of Europe, as in the case of the Madiai and other meek confessors, "the man of sin" is threatening to wield again that sword which, though forced

for a season to sheath, he never laid aside. Everywhere he is grasping at political power under the guise of spiritual authority, and only let him, either by himself, or in alliance with infidelity, acquire a more complete ascendancy, and the fires of persecution will again blaze, and new ranks be added to "the noble army of martyrs." Are we prepared for the ordeal? Were the tempest to rise, how much chaff would it sweep from the threshing-floor of the Church! how little wheat would it leave there! Were the furnace to be heated, how much shining dross would be consumed! how little fine gold would remain, only purified by the flame! At all events, though we may never be called upon to share the martyr's crown, we are called upon to imbibe the martyr's spirit. No man can be Christ's who has not the spirit of a martyr. For what is the martyr's spirit? Is it not to count all things but dung, so that Christ may be won? And can any win Christ without so estimating him? Nay, verily; for he himself has declared, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." This is to be a martyr in heart. And let us

not forget that he who has this mind, will show it in the little as he would in the great, in the calm as he would in the storm; in enduring the contradiction of sinners, as he would in confronting the rack or the stake.

It is clear, then, that there is a wide range for the display of godly courage in our ordinary walk and warfare. There are daily occasions to repel the suggestions of carnal policy, the insinuations of worldly wisdom, and the promptings of unbelief, with one of the Lord's faithful ones.

How ennobling this spirit! Even natural valor has something grand in it; but the heavenly heroism of him who fears God, and therefore fears none else, possesses a majesty which bespeaks it divine—the rather, because it is often displayed by the naturally timid and weak, yea, even by little children. As it is written: "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger." So, of the great "cloud of witnesses" whose exploits are chronicled in the eleventh chapter of the epistle to the He-

brews, how many were frail and faint, but “out of weakness they were made strong;” omnipotent strength was made perfect in their weakness;—hence, though but worms of the dust, they threshed mountains, or sustained worlds. “When I am weak,” said the great apostle, “then am I strong.” And can the archives of the world exhibit any grandeur of soul to be compared with Paul’s? In the near prospect of “bonds and imprisonments” he said: “But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself; so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.” And, in the immediate view of a cruel death, he exclaimed: “I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day.” Equally sublime was the bearing of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, when—as the burning fiery furnace blazed before them, and the infuriate tyrant overwhelmed them with threatenings—they calmly answered, “O Nebuchadnez-

zar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thy hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." No marvel that they overcame their furious persecutor, and wrung from his heart admiration of their conduct and adoration of their God. No quality adds so much weight and dignity to Christian character as this quality. The timid, trimming, compromising, inconstant professor disgraces the banner under which he marches, and betrays the Captain whose name he bears. The very world, which snares or seduces him from his steadfastness, will be the first to despise him when it shall have entangled him, and to speak of him and exult over him as fallen. In their estimation, therefore, he is exalted when he will not come down to them—he will have degraded himself by fearing their fear and coveting their applause. When he will not flee from his duty to save his life, then the world respects while it hates him ; but when betrayed into hiding himself in "refuges of lies," the world sets him at naught. "Their

rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges."

And what a blessed confidence and liberty does this virtue give the soul! "The wicked flee when no man pursueth; but the righteous are bold as a lion." "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father." "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." Numbers are held back from following Christ fully, through a cowardly shame. Well might Bunyan in his "Pilgrim's Progress" say, "No enemy so belied his name as Shame; for he was the most shameless villain that hung upon the pilgrim's steps, and clung to him to the last." Many would fain come to Jesus, like Nicodemus, by night. They are afraid of losing social caste and position; they are ashamed of being numbered among "fools and fanatics;" they covet the crown but they shrink from the cross. Rather should the Christian be ashamed of such shame, and afraid of such fear. "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts. Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread." "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he

also will deny us." There is special need that those should be admonished who occupy their business in the midst of a world that lieth in wickedness, to be more than ever "valiant for the truth;"—that they should be addressed as St. Paul addressed the Corinthians, "Watch ye; stand fast in the faith; quit you like men; be strong." Our age is one of compromise and concession. A pitiful, dastardly spirit of expediency has set aside the sway of stern and sterling principle:—from our statesmen and legislators down through all ranks of the community, the canker of a false liberalism has diffused itself; truth is sacrificed to peace, and wisdom to selfish policy. Let the godly beware of this leaven—hold fast the "wisdom which is *first pure* then peaceable,"—judge all things by the Bible,—assert its supremacy *in* all things and *over* all things,—smile at the charge of bigotry and blindness. "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for Christ's sake."

To young men especially, who are just launching forth on the sea of public life, do these considerations address themselves. At their age, the mind is most keenly alive to opinion—the heart most sensitive to reproach

and contempt. Many a hopeful youth has been laughed out of his conscience, and bantered out of his character. Such, therefore, peculiarly need moral courage. To them would we say:—Fear, that you may not fear. Fear God, that you may not fear man. Hearken to the voice of your “Leader and Commander:”—“Fear not them who, after that they have killed the body, have no more that they can do; but I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear Him which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him.” “Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” Take for your models the glorious examples of youthful heroism with which Scripture abounds. Imitate Joseph, who braved danger but dared not sin against God. Copy Daniel, whom the den of lions could not affright—who would not so much as cloak his fidelity to the Lord. Be followers of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who smiled at the burning fiery furnace—enduring, as “seeing Him who is invisible.” Imitate St. Paul, who “conferred not with flesh and blood, and counted all things but dung, so that he might win Christ, and be found in him.” Above all, strive to remember Him who “endured the cross, despising the

shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God ;" and who has said, " To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me on my throne ; even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." " Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ !"

CHAPTER IX.

JOY IN SERVING GOD.

HE knows nothing of genuine Christianity who does not know it as the well-spring of happiness. For what is the gospel? It is the revelation of God's plan for making man happy again. This accomplished in us, it has accomplished its design; this frustrated in us, its purpose has been defeated. Away, then, with the lie and the libel which Satan has forged and the world has fostered—that the service of Christ is a service of gloom and sadness. It has its own sorrows, but it has its own joys; it has disquietudes peculiar to itself, but it has a peace all its own; and its peace passeth all understanding, and its joy is "unspeakable, and full of glory."

There is joy in the service of God. We might have anticipated that such would be the case. Infinitely blessed in himself, he must delight in blessing. It follows that he must delight in communicating blessedness to all that he creates. The happiness of his creatures, in subordination to his own glory,

to which all things are necessarily subservient, must be his design.

If, therefore, the Christian revelation be a revelation from God—a revelation springing out of his mercy—we should at once infer that it would have for its object the restoration of happiness to those who through disobedience had lost the blessing. What reason would thus lead us to anticipate, revelation abundantly realizes; the Word of God, from first to last, points to the happiness of every one that receives the truth in reality and with power, as its natural scope and crowning result. We need only refer to the testimony of the Old Testament Scriptures on this subject. They abound in such declarations as these:—“Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord.” “O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.” “Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous; and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.” “Happy is the people that is in such a case; yea, blessed is that people whose God is the Lord.” “Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance: in thy name shall they rejoice all the day.” “Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thy

heart." "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Or if we pass on to the testimony of the New Testament, what is the spirit which it breathes? Christianity was ushered into the world with the proclamation, "Behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy." The Redeemer's invitation to the burdened and the sad was, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." To his disciples he said, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." His promise to them when leaving the world was, "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." The epistles bear the same witness: "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." "Rejoice evermore." "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice." "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds, through Christ Jesus." "The fruit of the Spirit is joy." "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." Such

are the sweet notes of the silver trumpet of salvation.

Shall we appeal to the experience of the saints, as recorded in Scripture? "Your father Abraham," said Christ, "desired to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad." The sweet singer of Israel thus tuned his harp to joy: "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want: he maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters." "Thou hast put gladness into my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased." In like manner the prophet Habakkuk, when he foresaw and foreshadowed the desolations that were coming on Israel, exclaimed, "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." Equally rich in examples of the beatific influence of grace are the Scriptures of the New Testament. When the aged Simeon embraced the Babe that brought salvation, his whole soul was filled with joy, and he said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, ac-

cording to thy word ; for mine eyes have seen thy Salvation.” What were the emotions of St. Paul, “when it pleased God to reveal his son Jesus Christ in him ?” He thus expressed them : “God forbid that I should glory”—rejoice—exult—“save in the cross of Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world.” What was the invariable effect of “the word preached,” “when mixed with faith in them that heard it ?” At first, indeed, they were pricked in their hearts, but afterward they were “those who received the word gladly” that were baptized ; and then we read, “they did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart”—so speedily did the fragrant flower of joy spring forth from the root of pain. They sowed in tears ; but “in a little moment” they reaped in joy. “Beauty was given them for ashes ; the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.” So it was with the Ethiopian eunuch. Philip joined him on his homeward way, and “preached to him Jesus ;” he believed—confessed his faith—was baptized—and “went on his way rejoicing.” How striking the case of the Philippian jailer ! One moment trembling—affrighted—overwhelmed—asking with in-

tensest anxiety, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” the next moment, having “believed on the Lord Jesus Christ,” and “being baptized, he rejoiced with all his house.” Need we add that the epistles all speak of the joy of those to whom the word of salvation came in power? They record of some, that they “received the word in much tribulation,” yet “with joy of the Holy Ghost.” Of others, that they “took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better, that is, an enduring substance.”

Abundant room and reason is there for this heavenly joy. It is “the joy of *the Lord*.” It is a joy that centres *in* the Lord, and is imparted *by* the Lord. It is a drop from the ocean of the blessedness “of the blessed God.” It is a joy in *himself*; not in sacraments and signs, not in gifts or graces, not in outward things. These are channels that may convey the living water to the soul; but they have it not in themselves: they are golden pipes that, if not made idols, bring refreshing streams to the thirsty spirit; but they are not the well-spring of those streams. The fathomless fountain is in the Lord Jesus, in whom alone are all the fresh springs of his people. “Re-

joice *in the Lord* always, and again I say rejoice." Each saint will say with the blessed virgin, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." Is there not joy in him—joy unspeakable—for the poor, blind, burdened, weary, condemned, despairing sinner, when he finds in him the righteousness divine, which justifies him freely—the blood divine, that cleanses from all sin—the Almighty Spirit, that quickens him to life eternal—the hope that maketh not ashamed—the title "to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away?" Can a man have his sins, which were as scarlet, made white as snow? Can he pass from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God? Can he be translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son? Can he be rescued out of the prison-house, from the bondage of sin into the glorious liberty of the sons of God? Can he exchange the husks which the swine do eat, for the "feast of fat things" which crowns his Father's table? Can all this take place, and the man experience no holy joy as the consequence of a revolution, compared with which all the changes which enrapture the men of this world are but as the toys of

infancy, or the sports of childhood? *Their* wells of joy have no depth—they are all surface. They are like the shallow water—soon stirred to the bottom by the slightest breeze. Their gladness is easily dispelled; but the happiness of the believer resembles the ocean, which even when its face is ruffled has calm in its soundless depths below. He who minds earthly things has all his treasures embarked in barks of bulrushes—one is wrecked, another swamped, another run down; and by-and-by he himself dies, and in that very hour all his thoughts perish. Not so with those who mind heavenly things. Their choicest treasure is stored in the ark of immortality, whose anchor is cast within the vail, and abideth sure and steadfast. The vessels which bear their earthly hopes may be whelmed in the waters; but that vessel cannot fail to land its freightage on the eternal shore; for Christ is its pilot, the Spirit swells its sails, and the Father has pledged his oath that it shall never sink.

“Your joy,” said Jesus, “no man taketh from you.” It is joy in himself—and he is “the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.” The happiness of the worldling—if happiness it can be called—is transient as “the flower

of the grass," uncertain as a shadow, soiled with the dust, and drawn from "broken cisterns." The happiness of the saint is sure as the truth of God, permanent as eternity, pure as the crystal river that issues from beneath the throne in heaven, and full as the ocean from which it is derived. "These things have I spoken unto you," said the Redeemer, "that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." This joy of the Lord is communicated *by* him, as well as found *in* him. It comes not by the will of man; it is not lodged in any ordinances—they only convey, but they never contain it; it is imparted by the Spirit of Jesus, who taketh of the things of Jesus and reveals them to the soul. He prepares the heart for joy, by purifying the heart from sin. He prepares it by breaking the heart of stone, that he may then bind up the broken heart with sovereign balms of consolation—pouring in the oil and wine of heaven. He is, therefore, called the Comforter, and "the Spirit of Adoption." Precious Comforter! There is no wound he cannot mollify, no pain he cannot alleviate, no sorrow he cannot soothe, no despair he cannot irradiate. His consolations and joys are the first-fruits of heaven. Hence it is said, "Now he that

hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who also hath given to us the earnest of the Spirit." "The fruit of the Spirit is joy;" and "in the presence of God is fullness of joy." Grace is glory in the germ. The river of water of life, which rises in heaven, has streams on earth—streams which make glad the city of God below.

There is joy to the servant of God in the service of his Father in heaven, and the joy which he feels is "the joy of the Lord." Let him thirst for it; drink of it abundantly; "draw water with joy out of the wells of salvation." He need not fear the living draught. It cannot intoxicate; it never palls. While it refreshes it invigorates; while it animates it sustains. For "the joy of the Lord is your strength."

It is our strength for active duty. It is the oil on the wheels of exertion, which makes them run freely and smoothly. It is not the sickly, dreamy, selfish emotion of the quietist or the recluse—the hothouse flower that shrinks from the open air, and needs perpetual forcing. The joy of the Lord nerves for toil, and braces for conflict; makes the yoke of Christ easy, and his burden light. What a man does happily, he will do heartily, and what he does heartily, he will do

well. “I will run the way of thy commandments,” said David, “when thou shalt enlarge my heart.” So, in withstanding the allurements or the onsets of the world; in maintaining the good fight of faith; in finishing the course assigned us to fulfill; in keeping the faith once delivered to the saints, even unto death;—there is nothing which so nourishes the inner man, so fortifies the spirit, so imparts elasticity to the step, vigor to the arm, and nerve to the heart, as “joy in the Holy Ghost.” It makes the *devoted* Christian—by making the *satisfied* Christian. The husks which the swine eat may excite the hankering of him that is in want; but he who feasts at his Father’s table turns from them with loathing. To delight in God is the way to delight in his service. The slave who dreads, and therefore hates, his master; or the hireling, who works only for wages—performs his irksome task with distaste and with weariness. But the dutiful and affectionate son, who labors without wish for present recompense save his father’s smile of sweet approval—he pursues his work with relish because he pursues it with joy. Love makes the labor sweet because it makes the laborer happy. Thus the Christian serves God because he finds his service perfect freedom

—he finds that “the work of righteousness is peace;”—he turns to the divine will through the power of attraction, as the needle turns to the pole or the sunflower to the sun; for his sun and his pole are Christ Jesus his Lord, from whom springs all his light of gladness. On the other hand, he who finds no fruition in his religion, is almost sure to be weak and wavering in his choice. Finding, or rather seeming to find, that the cup of salvation does not satisfy his soul, he will be tempted to raise to his lip the impure cup of earthly pleasure. Hence it is that many of the young who did run well are drawn aside to folly. They failed to taste the bread from heaven—the angels’ food, else they would not have hankered after the garlics and the cucumbers of earth.

“The joy of the Lord” strengthens faith as well as obedience. If faith do not ripen into joy, it leaves the professor open to the suggestions of disbelief, to the insidious insinuations of Satan—that God is a hard master, that his service is gloomy, and that his commandments are grievous. But let the servant of God find “peace and joy in believing,” and his belief so sealed will be established; he will know that in embracing the gospel he has not

“believed a cunningly devised fable,” for he will have a witness in himself that it is indeed “glad tidings of great joy.” So it will come to pass, that he will be confident, and courageous in his confidence, and shielded from “the fiery darts of the wicked.” He that is happy in his faith, will also be steadfast in his faith; but where restlessness and discontent intrude, they fill the heart with questionings and misgivings. In like manner, holy joy will be the strength of the believer’s patience amid all his sorrows, and of his serenity amid all the vexations, distractions, and uneasiness of life’s daily task. They who are occupied from early to late, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, in the vortex of mercantile affairs—know how much they meet with to fret the spirit and chafe the temper. They often feel faint and jaded and oppressed. Not a few of our traffickers are worn out prematurely by the high pressure of modern business. The overtired brain and overstrung nerves give way. Yet it is not so much the effort, as it is the anxiety, the application, or the excitement of their occupations which works the mischief. And what then will abate this fatal pressure? What will save the machinery from derangement and dislocation?—what, but the joy of

the Lord? That will keep a man tranquil in the midst of commotion—cheerful in the midst of disappointment—self-possessed in the midst of dangers—steadfast when all around are driven to and fro, and tossed up and down like the leaves of “the trees when shaken by the wind.” This well-spring within will also refresh the spirit in the dreariest hours; yea, give to the mourner songs in the night season. There is no more beautiful sight in this vale of tears, than a child of God rising sublimely above all that the world can threaten or inflict—enjoying most of heaven when he has least of earth. As a holy sufferer once said, while writhing in an agony—“I never had such anguish, but I never had such joy.” Or as one of the martyrs, when burning at the stake, exclaimed—“You ask for a miracle, behold one! these flames are to me as a bed of roses.” Was this illusion? —then what is real? Was this enthusiasm? —then what is sound and sober? A fiction, a sentiment, an emotion, could never have upheld “the glorious army of martyrs;” never have enabled them to wake the echoes of the dungeon with psalms of thanksgiving, and mount triumphant in their chariot of fire to their Father’s arms. Their spiritual joy so absorbed the inner man, that the tor-

tures of the outer man were scarcely felt. Such is the power of this heavenly grace. It imparts a strength which no burden can crush, no weariness exhaust, no disasters overwhelm.

Why, then, should any be miserable, when in Christ there is full provision made for the happiness of every child of Adam? “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” “And the Spirit and the Bride say, come; and let him that heareth say, come; and let him that is athirst, come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” “And whosoever drinketh,” saith Christ, “of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life.” Poor, weary, wandering child of earth!—whose heart is panting after satisfaction other than earth can supply—who sayest in thy secret heart, “O that I knew where I might find rest; that I could discover the portion of my soul!”—I tell thee, as they told the son of Timeus of old, “Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee.” Jesus the friend of sinners calls thee; that

yearning of thy spirit is from him ; he waits to bless thee. Cast away the garment of self-righteousness. Lay aside every weight that would retard thee, and hasten to the Saviour. Fall at his feet in faith, yield thyself into his hands ; and he will speak peace to thy mind—he will send thee on thy way rejoicing. Hearken to his expostulation and assurance—“ Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread ; and your labor for that which satisfieth not ? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.”

How sad it is, that so many who name the name of Christ drag on a morose, repining, wearisome life ; and thus bring up an evil report of the promised land ! They show no beautiful clusters of the vine of heaven, and consequently men of the world, taking advantage of such caricatures of Christian life, are ready to say—“ These men are less happy than ourselves ; they are fuller of complainings, more cankered with cares, more troubled about many things. We are told that the gospel is glad tidings of great joy ; but are these the evidences ? ” It is not in this way that Christianity can be commended. We must covet the joy of the Lord, in order that

“our light may so shine before men,” that seeing our blessedness as well as our holiness, “they may glorify our Father which is in heaven.” Let men of business, immersed in public avocations, study amid the hurry, vexation, tumult and toil of the world, to maintain a genial spirit, a heavenly sunshine of the soul—irradiating and tinging all their course, making it evident that they have a hidden light which earth never kindled, and which earth cannot quench. There have been many bright examples of such a career. Who that knew the generous Thornton—who that came into contact with the manly Buxton—who that communed with the genial Wilberforce, but saw in them that they had a joy which no man could take from them? And ought not the believer to be joyful? What!—if his sins are forgiven, and he is reconciled to God in Christ; what! if Jesus is his friend, his shepherd, his brother; what!—if the Holy Ghost is his comforter and his guide; what!—if angels are his attendants and all holy beings his brethren; what!—if God is his portion—heaven his eternal home; what!—if all things are his, whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas or the world, or life or death, or things present or things to come, all are his, and he is

Christ's, and Christ is God's—ought he not to "rejoice ever more"—to rejoice with "a joy unspeakable and full of glory?" Let not, therefore, the humble but faithful servant of God be afraid of holy joy, as though it were presumptuous. If it tend to holiness, it cannot be from evil. O that good men would no longer grieve the Holy Ghost by mistrusting his gift; neither think of it as a distant attainment which only a favored few are privileged to possess—or that it is reserved for the hoary saint only—if not for the heavenly state alone. It should rather be regarded as enjoined upon the very babe in Christ: for is it not written, "Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord?" We may stagger at appropriating a promise—but can we stagger at obeying a precept? But "Rejoice in the Lord always," is as much a precept as "Thou shalt not steal," or "Thou shalt not commit adultery." And do we not need the blessed cordial to strengthen our hearts for life's toil and struggle? Do we not need it to bear us up against the world's disappointments and disheartenments—to secure us from the world's seductions, and arm us against the world's assaults—to inspirit us in the evil day, and calm us in the stormy hour? Let us then

follow after it—for it is commanded; accept it—for it is promised. “In His presence is fullness of joy; and at his right hand there are pleasures for ever more.” Let the *sun of heaven* be the *morning star of earth*.

CHAPTER X.

UNWORLDLINESS OF MIND.

It was the peculiar and predicted character of Israel, that they should “dwell alone, and not be numbered among the nations.” Such was their condition in Egypt; such it remained while they dwelt in the land of promise; such has it continued to be since they were scattered abroad as chaff to the four winds of heaven. However dispersed, they are still distinct; a Jew is everywhere a Jew; his nationality has not been lost in his dispersion; the people are like oil upon the waves of the sea—everywhere diffused, yet nowhere blended. In this respect, as in other things, Israel after the flesh were an expressive type of Israel after the Spirit. Not more truly were the former nationally separate from the nations of the uncircumcised, than are the latter spiritually separated from a world that lieth in wickedness. They are so, however scattered, however interspersed among the ungodly, however they must have their habitations and their occupations in the midst of the men of this world,

“ who have their portion in this world.” Still they are a “peculiar” people, or as the word in the Greek signifies an “appropriated,” a “purchased” people—because they are redeemed by the blood, and set apart by the Spirit of Jesus from “the present evil world.”

It can hardly be denied, that those whom Christ calls, are called out of the world, called to be of another spirit than that which actuated them when they were of, as well as in the world. It is specified as the grand purpose of Christ’s suffering, that “he died for our sins to redeem us from this present evil world, according to the will of God.” Can we then be partakers of his redemption, unless we are rescued from the world? To the same effect is the language of God addressed to all his people: “Come ye out from among them, and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and be a father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” In like manner the Spirit spake by St. Paul, “Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” No language could be more expressive. It is abundantly clear, then, that there must be an essential differ-

ence between the world at large, and the chosen children of God. It is clear that the latter will be discriminated from the former, however they may be intermingled in their society. But wherein does the distinction consist? Does it consist in withdrawing from the occupations of life, in shrinking into the hermitage, or in skulking into the monastery? Far from it. Our Master, when interceding for his disciples, said, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil,"—the evil in the world. We are enjoined to be not "slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." Are we not bound, then, as enjoined by one of those excellent epitomes of our holy religion, which a portion of the Church has put into the hands of her children, "to learn and labor truly to do our duty, and get our own living in the state of life to which it has pleased God to call us?" It is quite possible for a man to come out of the world physically, and not to come out of it spiritually—it is quite possible for a man to retreat into the convent, and yet to carry the world with him in his heart; on the other hand, it is quite possible for a man to live in the midst of the busiest occupation, and yet to be cru-

eified to the world, and the world unto him. It is, therefore, in the spirit rather than in the letter, that we are to be separated from the world. And this separation is to be as real in these times as it was in primitive times; in these lands as it must be in pagan countries.

There is a baptized world as well as an unbaptized; a world of practical unbelievers, as well as of nominal and avowed ones. All are not Israel that are called Israel. All are not Christ's that are called Christians. A soldier of the cross must fight manfully against the world here, even as he would have to do were he in the heart of heathen lands; yea, it is much harder to maintain the conflict in the former case than it would be in the latter. An ambushed enemy is more dangerous than an open foe.

But what is the spring of an unworldly spirit? Faith, the mighty power of faith. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" The believer knows in himself that he has in heaven a better, that is, an enduring substance. His native country is on high. He looks upon the present world as no more than "the

house of his pilgrimage ;" consequently he reckons that he ought to occupy himself in it, and feel toward it, and hope from it, simply as a sojourner, who "looks for a city that hath foundations, whose maker and builder is God." Of such a one it may well be said, that his "citizenship" is in heaven—as the Greek word used by St. Paul, which we render "our *conversation* is in heaven," might be more literally rendered. And there was a peculiar force in the expression as employed by one who was himself a Roman citizen—as he once pleaded in arrest of an injustice that was about to be inflicted upon him—for Rome, being the mighty mistress of the then known world, gave such peculiar immunities and privileges to her citizens, that a Roman retained his rights wherever he might have his dwelling ; and whether he abode in Gaul, or in Britain, or in the extremities of the earth, still, wherever the Roman scepter stretched its sway, there he might claim and avail himself of his illustrious prerogative ; he belonged not the less to the great metropolis—challenged its protection, and gloried in its name.

All this aptly represents the state of those who are citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem.

They enjoy their citizenship, not only when inclosed within its crystal walls, but wherever they may be scattered abroad in the midst of this evil world ; in the body, or out of the body, they are free of the celestial city ; their honors, their home, their treasure, and their heart are there. Consequently, they pass through this world as the scene of their pilgrimage—"as a strange country"—as a place of tabernacling. Like Israel in the wilderness, they "are journeying to the land of which the Lord hath said, I will give it you." Their conversation is in heaven.

This is the essence of an unworldly mind. Actuated by this spirit, a Christian tradesman will not be enslaved by business, but will keep it in subjection to his soul's good. The unearthliness of his spirit will be manifest not only in the closet, the sanctuary, or the congregation of the faithful, but will exert its indirect influence on the most secular and distracting of his avocations and pursuits. In the counting-house, in the warehouse, in the exchange, he will still be a spiritual man. His unworldliness will show itself not in a forced or formal demeanor, not in affectation of dress, or look, or speech ; but it will appear in moderation of desire, in crucifixion to the world, in meekness of

spirit, in deadness to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. He must "walk in the flesh, but he will not war after the flesh." He lives amid, but he does not live according to the things of sense. "They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit." True, instead of being less punctual, he will be more punctual than others in his engagements; instead of being less, he will be more assiduous in his avocations; but all with a sobriety, a subduedness of spirit, which will broadly distinguish him from the groveling, idolatrous world around him. It is thus the people of God maintain a certain unearthly peculiarity throughout all their relationships to earth; they do not become assimilated to the crowd through which they hold the tenor of their way. Like that limpid stream of which we are told, that, entering a salt and bituminous lake, it clears its way through the uncongenial waters, untainted and uncommingled, so that it issues forth below as pure as when it entered,—so the current of God's people, passing through the dead sea of this evil world, does not blend with its waters, but speeds on undefiled to the clear ocean in heaven. On this wise it is that we

must be diligent in earth's duties, yet apart from earth's spirit; bodily in its midst, yet mentally and morally separate.

But let us descend to particulars, that we may see how this spirit will tell upon the every day course of mercantile men struggling with the difficulties, and busied in the concerns, of the world. It will restrain them from intimacy, though they cannot avoid intercourse with the ungodly. They cannot altogether escape from companying "with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with drunkards, for then must they needs go out of the world;" but they will disrelish such society, and recoil from its tone of sentiment; to mix with such will be a cross, to escape from them a relief. The Christian will feel it a mortification to be obliged to consort with a vain, sensual, faithless generation: it will be like breathing an oppressive atmosphere, till he can again return to the sanctuary, the closet, or the family circle, where he may breathe a congenial element, and feel his soul at home. In like manner he will be distinguished from the world by the moderation with which he forms his plans and prosecutes his undertakings. Earnestness and industry are perfectly compatible

with soberness of mind. “Let your moderation be known unto all men; the Lord is at hand.” He will not have his soul absorbed in his speculations as they have whose all is embarked on an earthly raft; for his treasure, his hope, his heritage are beyond the reach of peril and vicissitude. It will be seen that he has something in view far surpassing all that occupies him here; and that he engages in secular avocations out of a sense of duty toward God, rather than from choice, or interest, or affection. What those around him treat as matters of overwhelming importance he regards as little better than showy impertinences, which have more of semblance than reality; and with which he would gladly be done, were it not that he owes it to God, and to his generation, to undergo the toil, the struggle, the discipline, the weariness of life’s appointed task. He will also show “another spirit” in the friendships which he forms, and the associations which he chooses. It is one thing to be forced to come into contact with “the children of this world” in the way of duty, and another to conform to them in their customs, and consort with them in their amusements. Kind to all, he is intimate with few, and selects none for his friends who are not

friends of Christ. He copies Daniel—the man greatly beloved—in the Persian court. Surrounded by the corruptions of a palace, “he defiled not himself with the king’s meat,” he kept himself unspotted from the world. He imitates Joseph, who, whether in the house of Potiphar, or in the palace of Pharaoh, fulfilled the duties of his office, yet feared to “sin against God.” And the God whom he served was to him as “a wall of fire,” and as “a little sanctuary in the midst of the heathen.” The Christian is safe while he is separate. He runs little risk while he goes no further than duty leads him; but when once he unnecessarily, through heedlessness or eagerness for gain, enters into close relations with ungodly men, let him be sure that he is taking a step pregnant with danger, not to say disaster. So it proved in the case of Lot when he chose the plain of Sodom, regardless of the wickedness of its inhabitants, because it was well watered and fruitful as the garden of the Lord! His lust of earthly gain and sensual enjoyment plunged him into vexation, and peril, and loss, and desolation, and a terrible snare. So, again, it proved with Jehoshaphat, when he ventured upon unhallowed alliances with the wicked. In the

first instance he joined his forces with those of Ahab, to go up with him to battle against Ramoth Gilead : but the unblessed expedition came to naught, the king of Judah had to flee for his life, and the prophet of God thus sternly rebuked him, “Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord.” Yet, forgetting past warning and correction, he subsequently joined himself “with Ahaziah, king of Israel, who did very wickedly : he joined himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish ;” but God confounded the unprincipled coalition, for the ships were broken at Ezion-geber, “so that they were not able to go to Tarshish.”

These things were written as beacons to warn Christian men that they should not form intimate connections in business with godless men ; for such alliances cannot come to good. They will prove sources of sorrow, if they do not of sin ; and happy will it be for the Christian who has been so ensnared, if the Lord rend asunder the unequal yoke, and the loss of property avert the loss of peace, and consistency, and “good report.” Let then the Christian man of business guard against unnecessary entanglements

with the worldly. More especially let the young beware of connecting themselves with those who do not fear God in that relation which is at once the closest and the most influential in life:—"Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." He or she who marries, but not in the Lord, will assuredly smart for the step; God will infallibly make that individual see that it was an evil and bitter thing not to have consulted the Lord in a matter of such surpassing moment.

Need I add, that an unworldly mind will restrain its subject from that greediness of gain which, more than ever, characterizes the world in the present age? In what strong terms does Scripture brand avarice and the slave of avarice. It denounces the covetous man as "an idolater;" it speaks of him as one "whom God abhorreth;" and it affirms that "covetousness is idolatry." Stronger still, if possible, is its language when it asserts that the "love of money is the root of all evil;" implying that there is no form of sin which does not originate in, or is not aggravated by, that accursed disposition. Yet, how it binds men with its spell! How, at the present moment, is it driving headlong the mercantile world! It is but

faithfulness in the minister of Christ to testify, that the system of business as now carried on in this country is, to a large extent, unchristian and pernicious. Such is the high pressure of traffic, that it is hard for those engaged in it to retain unimpaired either their bodily powers or their mental faculties; much more is it hard for them to retain the calmness, cheerfulness, spirituality, and self-control which befit the citizen of heaven, whose heart and treasure are not here. In consequence, it needs an uncommon measure of grace and watchfulness, in order that they who are occupied in these things may not be swept along by the torrent of the age; in order that they may be of another spirit than that which surrounds them; mastering the world, instead of being mastered by it; ruling circumstances, instead of being their victims and their sport. To be the former, is to be a man—an immortal—a saint—a king; to be the latter, is to be a slave—a shadow—a dupe—who will awake at last to find that he has “sown the wind and reaped the whirlwind”—“sown to the flesh, and must of the flesh reap” everlasting “corruption.”

There is, therefore, need of the utmost carefulness, to escape the danger of being

borne along by the spring-tide of covetousness which surges around the Christian tradesman. He must take care that he keep the prow of his little bark ever toward the haven above. "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." The thrilling appeal of Christ should always echo in his heart, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Yet a little while, and a costlier coffin, more sumptuous funeral trappings, and a more garnished tomb than others have, will be all that untold wealth can do for him who has sold the birthright of his immortality for handfuls of shining dust.

It remains to be added that if a man be of an unworldly spirit he will have a large and open hand for the claims of God, the service of his Church, the furtherance of his truth, and for the relief of the poor and needy, "especially of them who are of the household of faith." How sad the tendency of wealth to contract the heart of him who gains it! Melancholy, but not uncommon, the spectacle of a man whose liberality has diminished in proportion as his resources have expanded; who gave largely when he was comparatively poor, and gives grudgingly now that he has waxen rich. The love of

accumulation steals into the breast like a serpent—poisoning the fountains of kindness. Wealth ministers to selfishness—and selfishness has nothing to spare. How fearfully significant, therefore, is the admonition of the Saviour, “Take heed and beware of covetousness.” “If riches increase, set not your hearts upon them.” Nothing is more alarming as to the soul’s safety than this craving after constant accessions to one’s property; this passion for adding field to field and house to house; for having splendid dwellings, and sumptuous equipages, and vast estates, that he may call the lands by his own name, and transmit them to his descendants. Such ambition should be left to the world—to those who have no other portion, who seek no higher reward. But you, O Christians, are not of the world. You profess to have a kingdom and a treasure “in the land that is very far off.” Thither, therefore, export your riches. “Make to yourself friends of the mammon of unrighteousness.” Leave it to the heirs of earth to “walk in a vain shadow, and disquiet themselves in vain; to heap up riches, while they cannot tell who shall gather them.” “This, their way, is their folly, and their posterity laud their doings.” But so should it not be

with you. If God gives largely to you—give you largely to God ; secure your gains by parting with them, and make them truly your own by laying them at your Saviour's feet. Is it for you to wish to have it said, when you shall have gone to your account, that you died worth so many thousands of pounds? Worth!—if that be all your worth, you are worthless indeed. Is it for you to be bent upon bequeathing to your children superfluous wealth—fortunes which are fitted to encumber their souls, and interpose between them and heaven? Rather seek first for your children, even as for yourselves, the kingdom of God and his righteousness. Bequeath to them the fragrant memories of your good deeds ; leave them a rich heritage in the prayers and benedictions of the fatherless and widows.

Many parents, who ought to have done better, have drowned their children's souls in affluence and luxury. Will those children thank them when they meet before the judgment-seat? I do not say that we may not enjoy in moderation what God has given us, for we are told that “God hath given us all things richly to enjoy.” I do not say we ought to forego the table of hospitality, or furnish it meagerly. Neither do I say that

we ought not to make any provision for our offspring. We are taught that the fathers ought to lay up for their children. Yet should we take heed that we do not, in the name of our children, rob our God, lest, happily, we entail upon them a curse instead of a blessing. In every part of the land, how many profligate sons have soon squandered in riotous living all the substance for which their fathers had toiled ; making shipwreck alike for time and eternity ! Happy had it been for both parents and children had more been dedicated to God, and less heaped up to prove a mockery and a snare !

O how beautiful, how truly excellent is this unworldly spirit ! How it adorns the doctrine of God our Saviour ! How it bears a living witness to Christ ! How it ever preaches a sermon intelligible to all ! one in its silent eloquence most persuasive—captivating others into an *unearthly* conversation. If Christians would let their light so shine before men that their good works might be seen, and their Father which is in heaven thereby glorified ; if they would have the world take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus, it must not be by pretense, or affectation, or formalism, but by the ethereal spirit which they breathe, by

the exalted tenor of their life, by making it manifest that they have a secret power which the world knows not; that they pursue business as others do not pursue it; that they endure losses as others do not endure them; and above all, that they bear prosperity as men of the world cannot bear it. If the more they have of earth the less earthly they become—if riches humble instead of exalting them, expand instead of contracting their hearts—the most worldly will admit that this is the power of God. We speak of adversity as a touchstone, and so it is; but prosperity is a much more searching test. It is related of one of the hearers of the excellent Richard Cecil, that he sent to his minister a slip of paper requesting the prayers of the Church for one who had come into sudden fortune—that the event might not endanger his soul. That individual knew something of his own heart, and realized the force of the startling saying—“How hardly shall a rich man enter into the kingdom of heaven!” In the same spirit of wisdom we are taught to pray not only “in all time of our tribulation,” but “in all time of our wealth,” *good Lord, deliver us.* Yet few there are who pray to God to keep them when they are prosperous, while in adversity

multitudes will pray to be delivered out of their affliction. In very deed, however, there is more need to pray to God that he would hold us up when the tide of the world is in our favor, than when the waves and blasts of trouble beat upon us.

Let the young set out in life resolved through strength divine to cultivate a heavenly mind. It is true that many of our young men have to ply their daily task in warehouses, counting-houses, or manufactories, where they breathe an atmosphere impregnated with secularity; where the world, the world's gain, success in business, cleverness in bargaining, are everything. How hard for such—susceptible as they are of the plastic power of circumstances, and easily seduced by surrounding example—how hard for them to keep the mind in communion with God; and while compassed with earthly influences, not to inhale them, but, through the golden tube of prayer, to draw down the air of heaven amid that tainted atmosphere which would otherwise soon quench the living lamp of godliness within the soul!

Let then the young man dare to be singular—not in affectation, but in righteousness. Let him be assured that, if only he is consistent, the world will respect even while it re-

proaches him ; and his employers, though they may not be able to appreciate his motives, will ultimately confide in his character ; yea, and those who at first made him the butt of their ridicule, will by and by say within themselves, “ May our souls be with theirs when we have to give our account to our Judge ! ”

Let no one suppose that to cast out the spirit of the world is to create a void within —to crush the energies, and dry up the sympathies ; far from it, Christ does not simply dislodge, he displaces the world. If he expel the love of it from our hearts, it is by substituting the love of himself ; if he wean us from glittering clay, it is by holding forth to us “ an enduring substance ; ” if he draw our affections from this land of shadows, and changes, and decoys, it is by the mighty attraction of “ a kingdom that cannot be moved.” If we are ready then to give up all *for* Christ, we shall find all *in* Christ. If we eat abundantly of the children’s bread, we shall disrelish the husks of earth. If we look much at the bright battlements of “ the city of habitation,” all here will look faded and dim. The soul smitten with the love of the Saviour turns away from its allurements, and sings :—

That uncreated beauty which has gain'd
My ravish'd heart, has all your glory stain'd;
Its loveliness my soul has prepossess'd,
And left no room for any other guest.

God Almighty give to us all grace to use
this world as not abusing it; to improve it
as the scene of duty, but not to love it as a
place of rest! It is at best a verdant quag-
mire: if we build upon it, we shall be en-
gulfed; if we tread lightly over it, we shall
escape its pollution.

CHAPTER XI.

JEALOUSY FOR THE HONOR OF GOD.

THERE was much good sense and Christian wisdom in the reply which was once given to a dignitary of the Church by a simple rural pastor. The latter had said to the former, while remonstrating with him on account of some unwise step that he was about to take, "If you act so, what will the people say?" To which the other replied with disdain, "Do you care what the people say?" The rejoinder of the plain man was, "I care as little as any man what the people say; but I care a great deal what the people have a *right* to say." How just the distinction! Human opinion ought to have no weight with us when it contravenes duty; but it ought to weigh much with us when we incur its censure by the violation of duty. It does not speak well for a man that he is regardless, though it would have been no less wrong if he had made an idol of his reputation. Our own name is to be of little estimation in our mind, except as it may affect the name of our Master. If he be

wounded through us, then indeed we ought to feel the smart; if we bring reproach on that holy name by which we are called, then indeed we ought to be confounded. It is always of the nature of love and loyalty to be sensitive in relation to the fame of their object. The soldier who is true to his country and his captain cannot be more keenly stung than by hearing them reviled; the more so if in anywise his own conduct has occasioned the reproach. And is the soldier of the cross to be less alive to the honor of the Captain of his salvation, who redeemed him with his blood? Is he to feel less pierced when Jesus is wounded in the house of his friends?

God has a people in the world. He has never failed to have a little flock—a ransomed, reconciled, renovated few, who, in the language of the apostle, are “called to be saints,” chosen out of, set apart from an evil world. Of these it is that God says, “This people have I formed for myself,” and immediately adds, “They shall show forth my praise.” They stand, therefore, in a peculiar relationship toward the rest of mankind; they are the candlesticks of God’s truth—the temples of his Spirit—the models of his workmanship. They are set as confessors in

the midst of gainsayers; as lilies in the midst of thorns. In them God is pleased to enshrine his light and concentrate his grace; so that it is through them, and by them, he brings his light and grace to bear upon the dark and corrupted world in which they dwell. Hence Christ said to the little group which he had gathered to himself, "Ye are the light of the world; ye are the salt of the earth." Through them the lamp of life is to cast its bright beams on the darkness that encompasses them; from them the savor of the divine influence is to transfuse itself into the mass of corruption by which they are surrounded. The ungodly will judge chiefly of Christianity by those who profess it, and be largely won or scandalized by the manner in which it is adorned or disgraced by them. As God said of old to his Church, so he says still, "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord." How sublime, how dignified, how responsible a position—to be the visible witnesses of the invisible God—the selected vessels of clay to convey to mankind the unsearchable riches of Christ! Such and so exalted is the destiny of God's people, in relation to his grace and truth in their bearing upon the world. What then follows? Surely that it is their paramount and imperative

duty to see that God's grace be glorified, his truth exemplified, his honor vindicated, his kingdom maintained by them. Their watch-word must be, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." What is to be dearest to them? Their wealth—their success—their distinction—their standing among men—their family—their life itself? No! these are to be to them but as dross in comparison with His name whom they serve. This is to be their pole-star. Reputation, ease, relations, life, must be sacrificed rather than Christ denied, God dishonored, truth betrayed, and occasion given to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.

But if this be the spirit of the faithful—and it must be if they love their Master—then they cannot but be exceedingly sensitive to reproach cast upon his holy name. No evidence will more unequivocally show their loyalty to their Lord than this godly jealousy. Would you give much for the affection of a friend who, in your absence, heard you traduced and misrepresented, yet cared not to espouse your cause? Would you set much value on the devotedness of a child who could sit by while the reputation

of his father was assailed, and yet bear to be silent in its defense? Is it not one of the surest signs of the fidelity of love that it is wounded, when the object on which it is placed is wounded; yea, that the wound is felt more keenly by him that loves than if it had been inflicted on himself? How touchingly beautiful is this delicate, disinterested sensibility of love! It will make the timid bold, the stammering eloquent. See it in the mother vindicating her child; see it in the patriot vindicating his country; but see it most sublimely and thrillingly manifested in the martyr pleading for his Lord. The cold carnal world cannot indeed appreciate the latter; but angels hover round it with admiring sympathy, and the King of angels stands up to watch the mighty working of his own strength, "made perfect in weakness." There is an affected plilosophy in the language of the world on this subject. "How can the Infinite be honored or dis-honored by an insignificant creature of clay? Can man reflect the slightest light, or breathe the slightest stain on majesty divine?" Absolutely he cannot, but relatively he may. The portrait cannot affect the original intrinsically, yet it may represent or misrepresent the object which it portrays; conse-

quently, such abstract subtilty does not in the least lessen the obligation to glorify God, or extenuate the guilt of such as blaspheme God, or of such as can bear with cool indifference to hear the blasphemy. Nor must we forget that, whatever the guilt of the godless who blaspheme, their guilt is surpassed by the guilt of those who, while professing to know and love the Lord, can make light of that blasphemy and try to gloss it over—arguing that neither the goodness nor the wickedness of worms of the dust can have any influence on Him that inhabiteth eternity. So to apologize for profaneness is to participate in its guilt.

But if loyalty to God will make us keenly alive to anything which touches his honor on the part of others, much more will it make us shrinkingly sensitive to anything in ourselves which might give occasion to the enemy to revile. Unless this be the rule of our moral sensibility, we have reason to suspect that our profession of zeal is hypocritical. Were it sincere, we must dread most the scandals for which we are most responsible. However the beam in our brother's eye might disgust us, the mote in our own eye would distress us still more. “Let the godless and profane speak all manner of evil

against us falsely, and for Christ's name sake ; but let not the contumely cast upon us recoil upon our Lord." "Outrage me as you will," the genuine soldier of the cross will say—"but do not insult the Captain of my salvation. My reputation is of little worth—only let not my Master be blasphemed." It is thus we must strive to shield the name we bear. It is thus we must seek, above all things, to give no cause to the adversary to rail, or to the weak to stumble. Let the enemies of the truth be able to find no fault in us, except it be concerning the law of our God. Like Daniel let us brave the lion's den rather than betray our Master's honor.

Religious men of business should therefore take heed that amid the affairs of ordinary life, they give no occasion of reproach —neither in the counting-house, nor in the exchange, nor in the manufactory, nor behind the counter—to those who lie in wait for their halting. The world will judge of their profession in the sanctuary by their practice in the market-place ; their evangelical principles will be measured by the integrity of their secular conduct, and by the spirit which they breathe, when mingling with the world. The ungodly are keenly

alive to deviations from what becometh the gospel of Christ, much as they pretend to slight its authority, and deny its power ; exorbitant in their expectations from the righteous, while they suspect the reality of their faith. Transgression directly against God, indeed, they will smile at, and easily forgive ; but transgression against man they bitterly resent. Their standard of guilt is in an inverse ratio to that of "the first and great commandment." Against this inversion the Christian must boldly protest, maintaining, according to the order of Scripture, that "to render to God the things that are God's," is a paramount duty ; while to render to man the things that are man's, "is like unto it." Yet, at the same time, special heed must be taken not to give the world occasion to say, "These saints are as hard in their dealings, as ready to take advantage of the unwary, as keen in their bargaining, as prone to commit ingenious frauds, if only they can do it without compromising their character, as those who neither profess to know nor to serve the Lord. The honor and honesty of skeptical men are brighter than theirs." Woe to those who provoke such imputations ! "It must needs be that offenses come ; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh."

Let it not be inferred, however, that we would have Christians become the dupes of the dishonesty of others; or that we would discountenance their watching for and taking advantage of openings for commercial enterprise—favorable changes in the market—opportunities for sober speculation. Far from it; rather should they strive to excel their fellows—for the truth's sake—as in virtue, so in skill. It was strikingly said by John Newton, that a Christian ought, in proportion to his talents, to surpass all other men in his own calling; because, serving a heavenly Master, and actuated by loftier motives and consequently following his vocation with greater cheerfulness, alacrity, and efficiency—if he were only a shoe-black, he ought to polish shoes better than a godless servant. How just the sentiment! Sound religion qualifies, instead of unfitting us for the performance of our allotted task. Let, therefore, the disciple of Christ be earnest in the prosecution of his occupation; let him be active, punctual, sagacious—and, if it please God—successful in business; but let him take heed that he does all this without imbibing that selfish, grasping spirit, which will impel him to overlook the interests of others in his own, and to purchase success

even by the sacrifice of principle. If riches increase, let him not set his heart upon them. Let him never provoke God to say, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." Let him, then, because he is a Christian, and by virtue of his fidelity to his holy calling, be enterprising—be prosperous—if it should seem good to the Lord to prosper him; only let his enterprise and his prosperity be unsullied by the slightest deviation from rectitude; let them be the result of upright dealing, straightforward industry, and honorable skill. It should be made evident to the men of this world with whom he may have to do, that as they cannot take advantage of him, so he will not take advantage of them; that, while his principles restrain him from dealing wrongfully, they do not lead him to act foolishly; that, instead of blunting his discernment, they give it a finer and truer edge. Thus may he convince them that "the children of light" only judge the more soundly even in matters of this life, because they judge according to truth. It is not seemly that the believing merchant should allow himself to pass for a fool in the

things of trade; though he must expect to be charged with folly in the things of the Spirit. It is by such a course, combining sagacity with “innocence,” manly good sense with simplicity and godly sincerity, that he can best vindicate the holy faith he professes, and justify the wisdom that is from above. Thus may he hope to constrain the gainsayers to glorify God in the day of visitation. They may refuse to listen to the ministrations of the ministers of religion, they may also refuse to lend an ear to his words. There may be times when Christian discretion will compel him to act upon the caution, “Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you;” but they cannot shut their eyes to the beauty of holiness, nor turn away their ears from the eloquence of a blameless example. This is the simplest and most effectual way of contending with the wicked; as it is said in Holy Scripture, “He that keepeth the commandments contendeth with the wicked.” No controversy is so effectual as that of the holy with the unholy—that of the honest with the dishonest—that of a consistent saint with all the worldliness, ungodliness, vanity, selfishness,

and turbulence of the scene in which he lives and labors.

While, however, we are to be supremely jealous for the honor of God in our own conversation, we ought to extend that jealously to the conduct of our Christian brethren. These have special charge of the name and truth of God. As for the multitude, though nominally believers in Christ, they can hardly be confounded with his cause. It is not to *them* the godless look as Christ's witnesses; it is not *they* who can betray him most sorely. It is the little flock who strive to act up to their profession, and who are therefore branded as exclusive, sanctimonious, peculiar—these are they with whom the glory of God is identified on earth, who have it most in their power either to belie or to justify "the wisdom which is from above." Over these, therefore, Christ's ministers are bound to watch with a holy solicitude—not as censors, much less as accusers of the brethren; but as those who "consider one another to provoke unto love and good works," as those who are mindful of the exhortation, "Thou shalt not suffer sin upon thy neighbor; thou shalt in anywise reprove him." "Faithful are the wounds of a friend." Let this then be your

rule of action, O man of God, in all suitable occasions ; if you see your “brother sin a sin which is not unto death,” not only “*ask God*,” but also *warn him*. Beware of making light of the faults of your fellows, because they belong to your party, or because they hold an orthodox creed. Rather feel them with special sensitiveness ; not indeed in a harsh and censorious spirit, which many mistake for godly zeal, but so as to bemoan them in private, and to tell them, not to others—but to the transgressors themselves. This is the part of a friend and brother.

Yet not only when “that holy Name by which we are called” is defiled by his own people, are we to be pained, but we must keenly feel blasphemy and contempt poured upon it in the so-called Christian world, and in the unbelieving world at large. It is a sign that our godliness is of a low and torpid character, when we are little grieved by the dishonor which our Master undergoes from the wicked. It was not so with the prophets of old ; one of whom exclaimed, “Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked that forsake Thy law ;” and again, “My zeal hath consumed me, because mine enemies have forgotten Thy words.” Such were the sentiments of holy men of

old ; and such is the mind God loves to see in his people. A hard, cold, insensible spirit, he beholds afar off ; but in the tender and susceptible soul he delights. When of old he gave—as Ezekiel in vision saw, commission to his angels with their slaughter-weapons to execute judgment on his apostate people, he first bade one among them who was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side, to go through Jerusalem, and “set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sighed and that cried for all the abominations that were done in the midst thereof.” These mourners in Zion were thus set apart by God for himself ; near them the destroyers were not suffered to come. And should judgments come, as they may come soon—as they will come ultimately—on apostate Christendom, should the power of “The man of sin” once more rally for persecution, or infidel anarchy spread desolation on every side, there is much reason to infer that the faithful few who have witnessed in public and wept in private will be sheltered in the evil day. It shall be said to them, “Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee : hide thyself, as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.” How

sweet will sound that “still small voice” to them, when the tempest shall be mantling, and the distant thunder bursting on the affrighted world!

Happy for us, if we are comparatively indifferent to reproach cast upon ourselves, because so much more alive to the dishonor done to our Redeemer. Happy for us, if the fearful desecration of his day; the profaneness and impiety pouring forth from the press; the overflowing tide of dissipation and debauchery; the horrible prevalence of drunkenness and excess; the loathsome crimes which disgrace our favored land, and open the mouths of our adversaries against us—happy for us, if we regard these things not with bitterness, not with self-righteous complacency, not with scornful disdain, but with shame, humiliation, and heaviness of heart—bemoaning them in our closets, and testifying against them in our lives.

Nor must the faithful be indifferent to God’s honor as involved in the government of the nation. They cannot be, if they hold as they must hold, that the Lord is King of kings, and Lord of lords; that by him “kings reign and princes decree justice.” Maintaining this, they cannot but maintain that the nation, in its national capacity,

ought to avouch the Lord for its God; to legislate for the furtherance and vindication of his truth; to discountenance heresy, and repress profaneness and blasphemy; to conform its laws to the divine Word, and recognize in everything its dependence on the divine blessing. When, therefore, God is betrayed in the high places of national assembly; when his truth is sacrificed to a pitiful state policy; when the question is not what is right, but what will serve a passing end, or secure a party purpose; when a selfish, shifting, pusillanimous expediency usurps the place of eternal principle; and when the opinions and views of the worldly-wise override the decisions of that Word which liveth and abideth for ever—then the people who know the Lord must not only mourn in secret, but lift up their voice like a trumpet, and affirm the eternal rights of the Most High. Away with the vile sentiment, so popular in these latter days, that nationally we have nothing to do with religion; that in the exercise of his political rights and the discharge of his political functions, the Christian may consult commercial interests, or have regard to party considerations, but that he is to ignore altogether the claims of faith and the counsels

of Scripture. A man is to fear God in the family, but to forget him at the ballot-box ! In such godlessness there must be some fault at the core. We are not indeed to be politically religious—that is hypocrisy; but we are to be religiously political—that is consistency. Would that this land were alive to the high position which God has given her, and to the awful responsibility involved in that position; that our rulers were just men, fearing God and using the authority committed to them for his glory ; but the responsibility for all this recoils largely on the constituency of the country. The electors choose the representatives who legislate falsely. How much, therefore, rests on the electorate ! Every faithful man possessing the right of a citizen, ought to regard it as a sacred trust from God, to be exercised for the good of the country and the honor of God. He ought to ask direction in prayer ; he ought to give to religious considerations the supreme weight in his decision ; he ought to arrive at his conclusion in the fear of God. This is what we ask of Christian citizens ! We may differ in judgment, we may hold diverse political views—but at least let us unite in upholding the supremacy of God in all matters, public as well as private,

civil as well as ecclesiastical. Nor should ministers of the gospel, on account of any fear of being charged with trenching on political ground, be deterred from speaking out boldly on a point where misconception of the grossest kind widely prevails. They are guardians of public as well as of private morality, and they must follow the examples of the prophets of old, who challenged submission to their Master's claims in the palace no less than in the cottage, in national councils no less than in domestic affairs. God forbid, then, that they should be afraid or ashamed to contend manfully for the right of God to rule in all and over all!

It remains that we enforce some of the lessons of wisdom which our subject suggests. While the world makes an idol of reputation, we must not esteem it lightly. Only let our aim be single. The world regards it as an end ; we must regard it as a means to a better end. Self is the object of the world's honor ; Christ of the believer's. If he shrinks from reproach, it is when he fears that it may in anywise obscure the great name he bears. He values a good name only in the Lord. He will take pleasure in reproaches for Christ's sake. How incomparably elevated is such a spirit above

the spirit of worldly honor? that spirit which will goad a man to risk being murdered, or becoming a murderer, rather than encounter the scorn of the foolish world. Jealousy for the honor of our Master will cast out this proud, selfish sentiment. Very gracefully did the holy and courageous Colonel Gardiner say to one who had challenged him, "You know I am not afraid to fight, but I am afraid to sin." That was true heroism, the sense of honor which comes from God: a principle as much surpassing the tinsel substitute for it, of which the world makes boast, as the glorious sun in the firmament transcends the painted sun on the signboard of a tavern. The one is rational—real—sublime; the other a pretentious mockery—a glittering hypocrisy. See to it, reader, that your star of honor is the honor of your Lord!

But let no one fondly suppose that he can maintain this high standard unless he has the Spirit of God. It is he who must form in us the mind which was in Christ Jesus; who, in the prospect of shame, and outrage, and agony, simply prayed, "Father, glorify thy name." Let Christ be formed in the heart the hope of glory, and then will that soul seek the honor that cometh from

God only—then will he be crucified unto the world and the world unto him—as the needle, true to the loadstone, is uninfluenced by other attractions.

Above all, ought we to beware that the way of righteousness be not evil spoken of through our misconduct. “It must needs be that offenses will come, but woe unto him by whom the offense cometh.” “Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ.” Consistency will make a man bold; inconsistency, weak and cowardly. It was a keen and cutting, but merited rebuke, which was once administered to a noisy, unstable professor, by a venerable minister; the former had vauntingly said, “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.” —“Ah! but,” rejoined the latter, “the gospel of Christ has much reason to be ashamed of you.” They are the worst enemies of the cross of Christ who assume it to betray it; who make it the badge of licentiousness, instead of the symbol of purity. The lives of professing Christians should be in harmony with their lips. Their characters should be as crystal, to reflect around the light which grace enkindles in the soul; not as dark lanterns to conceal, or stained reflectors to discolor the heavenly flame. In order to

this there must be no conferring with flesh and blood, no double-mindedness. The path of duty must be pursued with unswerving steadiness. There is no danger save in doing wrong. “By well-doing put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.” We may compel men to respect our uprightness, however they may hate our sanctity. So did some consistent students in one of our colleges, when they extorted from their principal, who was strongly prejudiced against their views, the emphatic testimony—“I hate the notions of these saints, but I admire their conduct.”

How ennobling in its tendency is this habit of aiming at the glory of God in all things! It will make us like the eagle, whose eye is on the sun, and whose flight is above the clouds. It will supply us with a motive ever mighty, and with an object ever satisfying. It will prove to us a pole-star, always beaming brightly on our path; whether in sorrow or in joy, whether amid darkness and tempest, or amid clearness and calm—it will tinge the murkiest clouds with silver. It will trace a track in the stormiest seas. He who labors thus to glorify God will also live a life worthy of his mysterious and deathless being. We were not designed

to be mere engines for scraping together shining dust; nor mere machines, to obey the external impulse of circumstances. No, we were fearfully and wonderfully made, sublimely and angelically endowed, that we might fulfill the will and reflect the glory of “the Lord God Omnipotent.” Thanks be to God that we can be raised through the riches of his grace by Christ Jesus! Waste we not, then, our energies on anything short of the divine glory. Thus shall we attain to everlasting distinction. For them that honor the Lord he will honor; but “they that despise him shall be lightly esteemed.”

How vitally important is it that they who are plunged in business, and especially that those who are yet young in public life, may retain a tender conscience—a sensitive scrupulosity about disgracing the Christian name! How careful should they be not to suffer contact and collision with the world to blunt the edge of their moral sensibility, or to lead them to adopt the Satanic suggestion—“I must take leave of my scrupulousness, or I must take leave of success!” Translate the sentiment, and to what does it virtually amount? Is it not, “I must serve Satan, or I cannot prosper—he is greater than God?” Are we startled at the naked blasphemy?

Let us, then, shrink from the principle in which it is involved. Success should be measured by the standard of eternity. Serve God—and success is certain ; or if we fail of sublunary gain, yet will our light affliction, which is but for a moment, “work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” We may at all times say, whatever temptations beset us, “I am not bound to be rich, but I am bound to be faithful ; I am not bound to bequeath a vast fortune to my posterity, but I am bound to lay up treasure in heaven ; I am not bound to be courted and admired as the most successful merchant on ’change, but I am bound to give such an account of my stewardship to God in the last day, as that I may hear him say, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful in a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things ; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.’” God Almighty grant that such may be the reader’s stewardship in time, and such his testimony and triumph in the great day !

CHAPTER XII.

HIS ZEAL FOR THE SANCTUARY.

THE spirit of the real Christian is eminently devotional. Whether contemplated in the closet, or engaged in his secular occupations, or mingling with the great congregation in the house of worship, he is everywhere distinctively a man of prayer. Happy are the men of business who possess and enjoy this spirit. Such do not permit their occupations to secularize their devotions, but they hallow their occupations by their devotions; these arm and animate them for those, and those brace and stimulate them for these. No one stands more in need of the ordinances of the sanctuary than he who is most afloat on the busy world; none is more dependent on those ordinances for keeping alive the flame of godliness in his breast. At the same time none is more in danger of being estranged from the temple by the absorbing force of business, by the thirst for gain, and by the influence of surrounding example. None is more strongly tempted to let earthly cares encroach upon the Sabbath, and either to

prefer the counting-house to the house of prayer, or to let the shadow of the former overcast the latter. It is, therefore, eminently fitting that those who are thus situated should avail themselves of all helps within their reach; and he who best knows both his dangers and the way to escape them, will most highly value the privileges afforded by the sanctuary of God's house.

The arguments to dissuade Christians from "forsaking the assembling of themselves together" are plain and unanswerable. God has clearly ordained public worship. He made man to be social; social in virtue of his sorrows, his joys, his wants, his affections, his relationships. If he formed men to be social in things natural, he no less formed them to be social in things spiritual. The isolation of selfishness is of sin; the union of love is of God. But union is cherished by communion, and communion strengthened by united worship. The faithful ought therefore to assemble themselves together in their Master's name. Accordingly, fellowship in worship may be traced from the earliest period. It seems not improbable that, as our great poet has represented, even in paradise the primitive pair had some chosen bower whither they resorted to offer

up their stated homage to their Maker. But be that as it may, no sooner do we find men beginning to call upon the Lord after the fall, than we find them calling upon him in fellowship. Where the patriarch pitched his tent, there he built his altar; and round that altar the household stately gathered themselves while the patriarchal priest offered the family sacrifices. Then as soon as ever God had singled out a people for himself, he bade them raise a tabernacle of witness and of worship, giving the minutest instructions for its construction, its furniture, and its ordinances. He added this memorable promise, which remains in all its force, "Wherever I record my name I will come to thee and bless thee." And gloriously did he record his name—first in the tabernacle, and afterward more gloriously still in the temple. He dwelt between the cherubim over the mercy-seat, and poured his blessing on all who truly sought him there. Passing on to the Christian dispensation, we find the assemblies of the saints carefully cherished. Jesus honored the temple. He loved to resort to his Father's house. He was very jealous of its desecration; the zeal of it ate him up. There he was wont to teach; there he wrought many miracles. After he had as-

cended into heaven, his disciples loved to meet for worship, sometimes in the synagogue, sometimes in the upper chamber, sometimes at the river side, where prayer was wont to be made ; and no sooner did opportunity serve, than they set apart holy places for the ordinances and worship of God. They were mindful that the Holy Ghost had warned them against “ forsaking the assembling of themselves together, as the manner of some was.” Indeed, the sentiment of the faithful in every age has been that of “ the sweet singer of Israel :”—“ One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after : that I may dwell in the house of the Lord forever, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.” If, therefore, any man have the mind of the Spirit—love the Saviour and those whom the Saviour loves—he cannot but say of the solemn assembly, “ I will not forsake the house of my God.”

The special manifestations of the divine presence vouchsafed in the congregations of the saints ought to endear to us such privileged scenes. Never has the promise failed, “ Where two or three are met together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” Always have his chosen found,

that "the habitation of his house is the place where his honor dwelleth." They have sought and seen his "power and glory in the sanctuary." The history of the Church in all ages is rich in illustration of this fact. The patriarchal altar was many a time illumined from on high: the cloud of glory often rested on the tabernacle of witness. The mystic splendor which shone amid the wings of the cherubim, reflecting a radiance on the mercy-seat, (that symbol of the propitiation of Jesus,) testified that "God dwelt with men on the earth"—that "his dwelling-place was in Zion." There, by voices and by visions, by "Urim and Thummim," and by secret communications of his grace, he revealed himself to his people. And now—what though the temple, with its magnificent ceremonial and impressive ordinances has passed away—what though no visible Shekinah irradiates the simple house of prayer—have we no signs, no tokens left? Have we not the substance instead of the shadow; the spirit in lieu of the letter? If the carnal worshiper sees less—does not the spiritual worshiper see more abundant glory? "If the ministration of condemnation be glorious, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed

in glory." Are there not still memorials of a present Lord among us—memorials sublimely simple, exquisitely expressive—his blessed gospel—his living sacraments—the preaching of his word? Neither are there lacking demonstrations of his power and love. His Spirit works mightily, and his cross puts forth its saving energy. True it is, that they who come not in faith find him not here; but those who come believably, hear a voice the unbelieving do not hear—feel a presence the unbelieving do not feel—enjoy a blessing the unbelieving cannot receive. If, then, God manifests himself surpassingly in the sanctuary; if he has never failed to betoken his special favor toward the social services of his children; it follows that they who love the Lord and love to meet him, cannot but say, "We will not forsake the house of our God."

As the sanctuary has been the place of his rest, so has it been the scene where the Lord has imparted richest gifts to his worshipers. On the day of Pentecost it was, "when they were all with one accord in one place," that "suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and filled all the house where they were sitting." And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of

fire, and it sat upon each of them : " and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." It was when the multitude were gathered together to the preaching of the word, that God poured out such a blessing, that in one instance three thousand, and in another five thousand, were added to the Church. Pursue the history of the Church ever since, and you will find that of the multitudes of the believing, the largest proportion have been born for eternity in the house of God. It is there God has given the mightiest proofs of his power, and the brightest manifestations of his love. If not brought forth in the sanctuary, the saints have at least been nursed and nourished there. It is there they have spiritually eaten the flesh and drunk the blood of the Lamb of God ; there they have been strengthened with the hidden manna of divine truth, and refreshed with living water drawn from the wells of salvation ; there has God met with them, and answerd them from above the mercy-seat ; there have they received special tokens of his favor, and enjoyed precious first-fruits of the heavenly vintage. Many a time has the worshiper entered the sanctuary in darkness, and left it full of light ; many a time has he entered it sorely beset

with temptations, but returned with the snare of the fowler broken ; ofttimes has he come perplexed, and departed assured ; come burdened, and gone back enlarged ; come prostrate, and gone back exalted ; come mourning, and returned rejoicing ; come cold, and gone back enkindled ; come secularized, and gone back spiritualized ; come weary, and gone back revived ; come earthly-minded, and gone back heavenly-minded. And does not God still give testimony to the word of his grace, and to "the place where his honor dwelleth ?" Does he not still send down the fire from heaven to kindle the sacrifice on the altar of the heart, and give responses, breathed by the Spirit through the lively oracles, to the humble inquirer ?

But the servant of God will love the courts of the Lord, and will not forsake them, because in them he tastes most of heaven below. If he would realize to himself what heaven is, he cannot form a better conception of it than by fixing on the happiest Sabbath and the happiest hour of worship on the happiest Sabbath he ever enjoyed in the assembly of the saints. Then and there, withdrawn from the world's vanities and disquietudes ; then and there, abstracted from

things seen and temporal, and absorbed in things unseen and eternal; then and there, all tranquillity without and calm within; then and there, faith almost turned into sight and hope into fruition—all earthly distinctions forgotten, the poor and the rich all one in fellowship and love, the whole assembly in unison, like many instruments all true to one key-note; then and there he has a miniature of heaven, he reaches the very vestibule of that temple not made with hands, where congregations never break up, and Sabbaths never end. He, then, who loves not such scenes on earth—how could he love the heavenly habitation of holiness? He who has no taste for the fellowship and the songs of the saints below, how would he weary of the ceaseless thanksgiving and the eternal communion of the glorified in immortality? How can he expect to go to heaven, who has no relish for the table which is spread with its first-fruits here? And of all men, the busy, harassed, wearied, mercantile man, forced to plunge dayly into the dust and din of the world's mart, is the very man who most requires the refreshment and savor of the sanctuary. If the tradesman is not at least as earnest on the Sunday as he is on the Monday; if he is not as much

bent on the merchandise of wisdom as he is on the gains of commerce; if he never sighs for the return of the day of rest, while he longs for the day of traffic—such a one has either never been crucified to the world, or else the world is regaining its hold on his heart. The spiritual vegetation of the soul will soon fade, if the soul thirst not for the dew which distills on the holy hill. Many can bear witness that a Sunday passed in living worship sheds a hallowing influence on the days of toil; and that the odor of sabbatical communion with God in the place where he has recorded his name, will hang round the heart throughout the secularity of the week. Some too can witness that when on the evening of the stated service, which forms the half-way well in the week, they have broken away from their places of business, and been glad to go up to the house of the Lord, rich has been the return of blessing and comfort into their bosoms. The very effort which the attendance costs makes the enjoyment all the greater. It is not a healthy sign of the times that our week evening services are not frequented as they once were. They furnish a surer test of thirst for the waters of life than do the services of the Sunday. Be-

sides, they are specially wholesome, as interrupting the current of earthly care, and suspending for a little the play of the overwrought machinery of the mind. To the Christian man of business the evening of divine service should be reckoned as an engaged evening. And, as such men are exact in keeping their appointments with their fellows, much more should they be scrupulous in keeping their appointments with their Maker. Alas! with what punctuality do many frequent the counting-house, who are seldom seen in the solemn assembly! How many hasten with eager steps to their buying, and selling, and getting gain, who repair with lingering pace to the scene where they ought to transact the affairs of eternity! What numbers who never think of contenting themselves with a single visit to the warehouse on the Monday, yet content themselves with a solitary attendance at church on the Sunday! What numbers are all alive and alert in the exchange, who are sluggish and uninterested in waiting on God!—as though the toys and shadows of time and earth surpassed in magnitude and moment the illimitable realities of immortality!

And now, having suggested some simple

reasons why we should not forsake the house of prayer—whatever be the name it bears, if only God is worshiped there in truth, and the name of the Lord Jesus is magnified, and his word and ordinances are faithfully administered—let us consider a few plain arguments why we should cling steadfastly to the Church of our fathers—or to that religious body or denomination to which in the order of Providence we have become attached, uphold it, and defend it, and do it good. This we may do without tending to narrow our charity—while we most assuredly increase our stability. We ought to appreciate our own privileges, without judging or despising others.

In recommending a steadfast adherence to the Church of our early associations, it is presumed that that Church is Scriptural in its creed, and evangelical in its practices. If, on a fair and candid investigation of the subject, one becomes persuaded that the doctrines taught in his Church are not in harmony with the Holy Scriptures, that they are defective as to certain essential truths, or are erroneous on radical and vital points, then is it plainly his duty to withdraw himself from such a Church, and seek another and more Scriptural one. The same

great law which gives to every man the right to examine and judge of the doctrines he hears from the pulpit, devolves on him the responsibility of hearing the truth, and turning away from error. So likewise, if with a Scriptural creed, and a ministration of doctrines not positively opposed to the gospel, are associated unscriptural observances; or, if there is a practical disregard of religious duties, and the activities of Christianity, then may even an orthodox Church be forsaken, because its orthodoxy is only that of the letter, and not of the spirit. But even in such cases great caution should be used. Objections should be well examined before they are received as altogether valid. The Scriptures must be carefully and thoroughly studied before it is safe to form a system, varying in important points from that in which the inquirer was educated; and especially must such an examination be prosecuted with a mind sincerely desiring to come at the truth—open, ingenuous, and not prepossessed.

Nor is it safe always to reject one's Church whenever it is found that some of its less important doctrines or practices are not well sustained by the word of God. Many things pertaining to ecclesiastical affairs are left

undetermined by the Scriptures, and so are matters to be regulated by human knowledge and discretion. Nor is it strange that what is so determined by fallible men should be imperfectly done. But as the whole subject is one of expediency, it will often be found better to endure the imperfection of what is established, than to forego its advantages. And of the more vital points that pertain to the substance of gospel truth, not every degree of error is fatal to the truth with which it is mingled. Much of the difference found among genuine Protestant Churches is rather in modes of statement than in the substance of the doctrine set forth. Doubtless there are real differences; nor are these wholly unimportant, though they are for the most part non-essential. It is at least the part of wisdom to be slow to condemn as very wide of the truth, the faith in which we have been educated, and by whose agency we have been brought to the knowledge of salvation, until thorough and prayerful examination has settled in our minds the conviction of its real and radical erroneousness.

Especiaily should we be slow to make any such changes on account of the differences of ecclesiastical orders found among different

religious bodies. Few questions have been canvassed with so much learned diligence, as those relating to the forms of Church government, and the essential conditions of churchship ; and if all this learned inquiry has made anything evident, it is that no form of administration may claim especial favor, either from the word of God or from its practical workings among men. Churches of all forms of government are found to be about equally successful, or otherwise, in edifying their own members, and in turning sinners to righteousness, according as they more or less faithfully set forth the great truths of religion, and employ the appliances of the gospel in their ministration. The unerring notes of genuine churchship are to be chiefly sought, not in outward signs and accidental circumstances ; but in the evidences of the divine favor manifested in the gifts of the Holy Ghost, building up the faithful and obedient, and arresting and reclaiming the outcast and disobedient. At various times and places this saving power has been manifested in nearly all religious denominations among whom the great doctrines of Christianity have been cherished. Let each, therefore, abide in the relations in which Providence has placed him, unless some

better reason for change is found. The same considerations apply with equal force to the subject of ceremonies and forms of worship. It is certain that the Holy Scriptures have left these things undetermined ; and thus clearly imply that they constitute no part of the essence of Christianity. There is, also, an abundance of evidence that they have been often modified and arranged to suit external and accidental circumstances ; and in all these various circumstances the same blessed influences have followed the use of the means of grace. Prayer is answered without regard to the bodily posture of the suppliant ; the holy supper becomes a spiritual feeding upon Christ, whether received kneeling or sitting, if received in simple gospel faith ; and the word of divine truth is equally the power of God unto salvation to all them that believe, whether dispensed by ministers of one order or another.

But while these things seem to be altogether indifferent, it is often the case that the things which we have learned to associate with our holy exercises receive from them a relative sacredness, which we may not disregard without serious loss. The early forms of our worship are often inseparably united

with that sacred exercise in our after life ; things indifferent in themselves become incalculably important to us by association, so that to separate from them would often be equivalent to an abandonment of the services of the sanctuary. The Christian man of business is zealous for the sanctuary—the Church in its general and diffused character, on account of its essential excellence, and its practical utility among men. Contemplating it in its wide extension, the real “holy catholic Church,” he feels that by his connection with it, he is associated with the pious and holy of all lands, and in all ages. Overlooking mere outward forms and sensible signs, and disregarding names and conventional observances, he recognizes all who hold the common Head as his brethren, and fellow-heirs of God in Christ Jesus. Looking backward along the past ages of the Church’s history, he recognizes its verity not only under the gospel dispensation, but passing beyond he finds it established on Mount Zion, or dwelling in the tabernacle in the wilderness, or in Abraham’s tent at Moreh, or in the ark with the few faithful ones found in the earth, or among the older patriarchs with whom God spake face to face, and among whom were cherished the same faith

and hope that now animate and sustain the Church in the glory of the gospel day. Of this "chosen generation" he feels himself to be a member, and in this he exults more than in all worldly honors. To be one of that "peculiar race" he feels to be an honor greater than the world can bestow; and as he values the honor thus laid upon him, his love for the source of his honor is enhanced. He also finds great excellence in the sanctuary, since to it belong the great doctrinal truths of the gospel, and the holy ordinances through which it is brought to operate to the salvation of those who use them. Though he may seem to set but little value on the abstruse questions of theology that have divided good men, yet in the essential truths of that system he finds an ever-enduring worth. Like the Psalmist, he delights in the law of the Lord, and from his love of the blessed word he meditates upon it day and night. He also finds a sacred delight in the ordinances of worship and means of grace thus afforded to him. And because of the honor which God has laid upon the Church, in making it the depository of his truth and the dispenser of his grace, he too delights in the spiritual Zion, and loves the courts of the Lord's house.

The society into which he is brought, as a worshiper in the house of his God, is such as he most heartily delights in. Very possibly he may there mingle with a company, the social position of many of whom are below his own; but here the rich and the poor meet together on a perfect level, as children of a common Father, and heirs to the same glorious heritage. Here kindred spirits unite in common and joint acts of prayer and praise, while from the assembled band goes up a sweet incense to the throne of God. Though not blind to the frailties and imperfections of truly good men, and though compelled, however reluctantly, to believe that some with whom he meets in the guise of Christians are not what they would seem to be, he is, nevertheless, still convinced that in that association alone may he look for those characteristics of mind and heart in which he chiefly delights. There the pious ones meet together, drawn by a common attraction, and in obedience to the same great commandments. There only does he hope to find true virtue; for he knows that such virtue can only flourish when rooted in piety, and piety always leads its subjects to the sanctuary. While he contemplates these things he finds cause to bless God for the

distinguishing mercy through which his lot was cast among such favorable circumstances, and in the fullness of his confidence in the divine beneficence, he is ready to exclaim, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

The genuine Christian has a high regard for the sanctuary, because of the happy influences which come through it and its ordinances to the world. Knowing from his own experience something of the evil of sin, and seeing all around him the moral darkness and consequent degradation that sin is producing in the world, he looks to the sanctuary—the power of a vital Christianity embodied and set forth in the doctrines and ordinances of the Church—for the only adequate remedy. He knows that there is "balm in Gilead, and a physician there." He has seen somewhat of the healing efficacy of the gospel; and as he pities the ruin of our fallen race, he loves the means provided for their recovery and salvation. And he has confidence in its power to save. In himself it has proved its sufficiency to save from guilt and guilty fears; from the powers of the carnal mind, and the slavery of the world; and by the same "Holy Spirit of

promise" is he "sealed unto the day of eternal redemption."

As a Christian he is often occupied in efforts to do good to the souls and bodies of men, "to visit the fatherless and the widow in their afflictions," to carry consolation to the house of woe, and as far as in him lies to diminish the fearful sum of human groans and tears and bitter lamentations. And while thus dealing with wretchedness and sorrow, he cannot fail to see how very intimately is all this connected with sin. He would, if it were possible, dry up these streams of sorrow; but this, he very well knows, can only be done by staunching the fountain of sin in the depraved hearts of men—a work to which all human agencies are utterly inadequate. But he also knows that there is power in the gospel equal to this apparent impossibility—that the word of God's truth, dispensed according to God's appointment, and accompanied by the energy of the divine Spirit, is able to transform the polluted and fallen ones of earth into children of grace and heirs of eternal life. He has learned, both by instruction and experience, that there is, agreeable to the ancient prophecy, "opened in the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem;" that is, in the Church of Christ,

and for all who come to enjoy its sacred privileges, "a fountain that cleanses from sin and from transgression." Because of the happy influence of the streams from this fountain, which he meets with on every side, as a friend to his race he loves the sanctuary of his God.

In this good work he finds, too, that he is not alone. Others are also engaged in like efforts to do good. But who are they whom he finds thus engaged? Are they the profane, the godless, the unbelieving, and the revilers of religion? Far from it. It may, indeed, be conceded that some not personally devout have been beneficent and humane; but even such have been made what they are by influences emanating from Christianity, and their "good works" should in justice be set down to the credit of religion. But while it is gladly conceded that some who are not pious toward God are kindly disposed toward men, it must also be asserted that this is much rather the exception than the general rule in such matters. As we know that the devout man is a benevolent one, so we shall not often err if we conclude that the benevolent man is also a devout worshiper of his God. It is a fact known to all who inquire into these things, that our

vital Christianity—the religion inculcated in our evangelical congregations, and professed by those who, with the name of Christ, receive also his law as the rule of their conduct and his Spirit as the guide of their life—that this only seems sufficient to actuate and sustain the efforts needful to mitigate human sufferings and carry consolation to the house of woe.

He sees, too, that almost every instance of combined efforts and instituted agencies for this purpose have had their origin in the Church, or under its immediate influences. Wherever the Church has been set up and gained for itself a place among the active social institutions of the people, there is found the hospital for the sick, the asylum for the insane, the alms-house for the destitute, and the prison, a place of refuge and restraint for the vicious and injurious. The Church itself, in its special organization, for ages filled these important offices, and now accomplishes the same good purposes, in part through her own appliances, and in part through other agencies to which the Spirit of the gospel, diffused in community, has given rise: so that he who delights in seeing “good works” multiplied among men; who sympathizes with sorrow, and with the

joy that succeeds to sorrow redressed, should confess and honor the source of all these blessings. The good man whom God has instructed in the way—the Christian man of business whose acquaintance with the practical workings of things enables him to judge correctly in these matters, sees at once their happy results, and the spring from which they rise. He traces the thousand rivulets that irrigate this arid waste of sin and misery back to its fountain in the divine goodness; a fountain which pours its streams through the sanctuary, for the healing of the people. And in the same degree that he loves his fellow-men, and pities the misery of the outcast and degraded, he learns to honor the Church of his God, and is inclined to promote her elevation and influence in the world. Caring at once for the temporal and the eternal interests of those about him, he seeks to promote both by extending the praises of the house of God. Let our Christian men of business consider these things, nor rob the house of God of its just honor and service, lest in so doing they rob their own souls. Let them carry the habitual promptness and punctuality of their secular callings into the affairs of religion. As they go early to their places of daily occupation,

so should they, at the proper time, hasten to the house of prayer. Let the man who is busiest in his worldly affairs during the six days of labor, be also the most diligent man on the Sabbath. If he is seen to be all life during the former, and all listlessness during the other, he but too plainly indicates that his heart is not set on the things above. And if he has no relish for the brief services of the earthly tabernacle, how would the unending worship of the eternal temple pall upon his taste ! Let, then, no suitable opportunity be passed unimproved ; the one carelessly omitted may be the very one designed by infinite Goodness to be the vehicle of the richest blessings. Nor is it less important to love and cherish in our hearts the sanctuary, than to frequent its services, and wait upon its ordinances. To love the house of God—“the place where his honor dwelleth,” is a condition on which depends much of the advantage offered us in the sanctuary. And this favor must be manifested in corresponding actions. Our free-will offerings must be given in the spirit, if not in the measure, of her who “cast all her living” into the treasury. There has, indeed, been a great improvement in this matter within a few years past. Much has been done, both by pecu-

niary contributions and by personal efforts, to meet the religious demands of the age. In this all good men do and will rejoice. There is still, however, a wide and necessary field to be cultivated; nor should any who are jealous of the honor of God's house cease from their efforts till the Church embrace and bless our whole race. Here let our "young men" who "are strong, and have overcome the evil one," put forth their patient efforts to do good. Here let our men of wealth consecrate their riches and their energies. Too often we see this class of persons pursuing quite another course—a course as disadvantageous to the temporal as the eternal interests of themselves and their families. They build magnificent mansions, they purchase lordly estates, they bequeath unwieldy heritages to their posterity—to be spent, perhaps, in gambling, debauchery and show—to prove a snare and curse to them. Is not this to walk in a vain show? Is not this to "sow the wind and reap the whirlwind?" Rather should they "make themselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness;" better were it for them to love the people of God, and build synagogues for his worship; and so would they lay up in store for themselves a good foundation against the

time of trouble. Here is an ambition worthy of a renovated and undying soul.

The times call for this kind of Christian activity and devotedness. Strong and subtle foes are actively striving against the cause of Christ. On the one hand is seen the wily machination of Anti-Christ, attempting to subvert our social and religious privileges, and to bring us into the bondage from which our fathers of the Reformation, by the grace of God, freed themselves, and their Church and country. On the other is covert infidelity, assuming the guise of a specious liberalism, but which is intensely and almost exclusively hostile to the spirit and institutions of our holy religion. The greed of gain, so characteristic of the present age, is powerfully antagonistic to the unworldly spirit of the gospel, and the unblushing boldness with which long-condemned practices are now recommended in high places, all indicate that the time of conflict is not past, and that whoever is on the Lord's side should boldly assert his position and vigorously maintain the cause of truth and right. Under God, our land has yet been preserved in the enjoyment of a pure Protestant Christianity; let every patriot remember that our Protestantism and our liberties must stand

or fall together. The whole world is looking to this and other Protestant countries for the maintenance of the pure gospel, and the vindication of the sacred freedom to worship God according to his word. May he equip and strengthen his people for the struggle ! and may it appear in the event, that according to the promise, "Thy people are willing in the day of thy power."

CHAPTER XIII.

HIS ZEAL FOR THE SABBATH.

As God appointed his holy day for the individual to keep it to his glory, so he appointed it for the nation as a sign of his covenant with a people. Viewed in this light, the desecration or the sanctification of the day of rest is largely the criterion of a Christian country's faithfulness or infidelity; and will prove, in the long run, a main hinge of the prosperity or the downfall of that kingdom. It was in this view that God spoke of his day, when he said, "Hallow my Sabbaths, and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God." It was in this view he spoke of it when he declared that he would pour forth his fury upon Israel because they had defiled his Sabbaths; and it was in the same light he regarded it, when he said, "If ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the Sabbath-day, and not to bear a burden even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem, on the Sabbath-day, then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the

palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched." As God threatened, so he did. The desecration of his day was one of the most crying of the sins of Israel. Their dispersion, desolation, and captivity were the consequence. And when God had brought back a remnant, who had restored the temple, and raised from ruin the walls of their holy city—everything depended on their faithfulness to God, on their steadfastness in his covenant. Then, too, their pious leader showed himself not more jealous for the honor of the house and the name of his God, than for the authority and sanctity of the Sabbath.

We are now to consider the subject of the holy day, the Christian Sabbath, and the man of business in his relations to it, how he ought to recognize and uphold its authority, how he ought to enter into its spirit, and how he ought to realize its blessings. These three branches of illustration will make up the subject matter of this chapter.

In the outset, it behooves us solemnly to recognize the divine authority of the day of rest. We ought to be fully persuaded in our minds on this point. It underlies all the rest. If a man be loose and speculative here, it is clear that he will be capricious

and unreal in his observance of the ordinance. It is strange that there should ever have arisen any question in the case, so manifest is the mind of God on the subject. The doubt can hardly have sprung from the head ; it must have originated in the heart —the “evil heart of unbelief.” Men have disliked the restraint of the day, and have, therefore, set to work to weaken its obligation. Alas ! that some from whom better things might have been expected, should have lent the weight of their names to such an attempt. They must not, however, influence us—to the law and to the testimony alone we appeal.

The time and purpose of the institution of the Sabbath ought to silence all controversy as to the universality and perpetuity of its obligation. It was instituted for Adam in the time of his innocence, when the whole human race was yet in his loins ; it could not therefore be designed for a particular people ; it must have been intended for mankind in general. It was ordained in commemoration of an event which equally relates to all generations—the consummation of the work of creation. The ordinance was consequently as long anterior to the Mosaic law, as was man himself.

That law did not therefore enact—it only confirmed, the law of the Sabbath. It is true that Scripture history is silent respecting the observance till the time that Israel sojourned in the wilderness; but it is no less true that Scripture history is silent on several other salient subjects during the same period. Meantime we have strong presumptive evidence that it was sanctified from the beginning by those who called upon the name of the Lord, though its sanctification by them is unrecorded. For when it is again brought to view, it is an ordinance recognized and regarded by the Israelites, and that antecedently to the giving of the law from Sinai. When receiving instructions respecting the gathering of the manna, they were simply directed to gather and prepare a double portion on the sixth day, because the morrow would be “the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord.” Thus the institution reappears on the current of inspired history, not as a stranger, but as a familiar friend—as acknowledged by the people, and upholder by God. This reasoning is greatly strengthened by the mode of expression employed by God when, on Sinai, he enacted afresh the law of paradise. He said not, Thou shalt keep holy the Sabbath-

day; but, "*Remember* the Sabbath-day to keep it holy." Clearly, therefore, this commandment enforced what was known, not what was new.

And where did the Almighty Lawgiver place the precept when he proclaimed it afresh? Was it among the ritualistic or the political institutes of Israel? Was it among the typical and the transitory? Had he done so, it might have been inferred that the obligation of the observance was limited to one nation, and peculiar to one economy. But the divine finger wrote the command in the very center of the moral law. It is placed as the golden clasp that binds both tables of the law together—duty to God and duty to man. Since, then, God embodied it in the moral law, who shall dare to tear it thence? If he has designated it as a *moral* precept, who shall presume to set it aside as a *positive* one? He who has the hardihood to blot out the fourth might just as well obliterate the sixth or the seventh command. The same authority which makes the latter, makes the former binding. He, therefore, that should keep the whole law, and yet offend in this one point, would be guilty of all; for he would snap the chain which binds the whole upon us.

And let us not forget that the ten commandments are surrounded with a surpassing majesty and awfulness. Other injunctions were given mediately through Moses, who wrote them and communicated them to the people. But God himself, from his pavilion of darkness, proclaimed the moral law. Sinai was all in a flame—the mountains trembled—the trumpet pealed—the thunder roared—the lightnings blazed—while the voice of Deity was proclaiming—“REMEMBER THE SABBATH-DAY TO KEEP IT HOLY.” Afterward, in common with the other nine commands, it was engraven on tables of stone by the Creator’s hand; and ultimately lodged in the ark of the covenant, beneath the mercy-seat, within the mystic precincts of “the Holy of Holies.”

Passing from the law to the prophets, we find that in most of their writings, and especially in those of Isaiah, the holy day is signally magnified; heavy judgments are denounced against those who violate, and glorious promises made to those who hallow it. And when we come to the New Testament, though there is no express repetition of the commandment, yet Christ himself glorified it by his obedience, and ratified rather than relaxed its universal author-

ity, by declaring, "The Sabbath was made for man." Here, however, we are encountered by what seems to many a formidable difficulty—the gradual transfer of the Sabbath rest from the last to the first day of the week. To some, it seems that the force of the divine command has thus been neutralized. Yet, why should this circumstance affect the stringency of the precept? Why should not the sacredness of the institution continue on whatever day it may please God that it should be observed? The essence of the ordinance lies in the dedication of one day in the seven to God, not in the precise day that is devoted. This, reason itself would infer, since it would be impossible for the same identical time to be kept by the faithful in all parts of the earth. The mode of expression used in the commandment, as it is given in Scripture, leads to the same inference; for though through some strange oversight it is said in the English Prayer-book that God blessed the *seventh* day and hallowed it; in the Bible it is written, "God blessed the *Sabbath-day* and hallowed it." So the consecration and the blessing were attached to *the day of holy rest*, not to the *seventh* day absolutely. Yea, and even under the old dispensation was there not intimation of a new and no-

bler Sabbath? How else can we understand the Psalmist, when he says, "The stone which the builders refused, is become the head-stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made—we will rejoice and be glad in it?" Surely it was indicated here, that as the consummation of the first creation was immortalized by the setting apart of a holy birthday to commemorate it; so the elevation of the top-stone in the second creation—when the Redeemer had finished his work of atonement, burst the bars of death, and led captivity captive—should have its own special day of high commemoration—overshadowing, but not superseding, the memory of the former. Was it not meet that so it should be? For if the first work had glory, how much does the second excel in glory!

—“ ’Twas great to speak a world from naught,
’Twas greater to redeem.”

Redemption has eclipsed creation, as the risen sun shrouds with his splendor the morning star. Besides, the Sabbath of the seventh day was dimmed, for it reminded us of Eden lost through sin; but the Sabbath of the first day is glorious, for it tells us of

Paradise restored through grace—and points to the endless Sabbath rest that “remaineth to the people of God.” Beautifully and befittingly, therefore, did Jesus rise on the first day of the week, instead of on the seventh, and so hallow and bless “the *Lord's day*,”—making it the first-fruits of our time, as he is “the first-fruits of them that slept.” In like manner, all his chief appearances, after his resurrection, were on his own selected day. On that day, too, the promised Spirit was poured out upon the apostles, and “cloven tongues like as of fire” rested on their heads. It was on that day the disciples were wont to meet together for breaking of bread and for prayer. It was on that day, “when the disciples came together to break bread,” that Paul preached unto them at Troas, “ready to depart on the morrow, and continued his speech until midnight.” It was of that day the apostle John spake in the opening of the *Apocalypse*, when he said, “I was in the Spirit on the *Lord's day*”—thus proving that the first day of the week was recognized even then by the universal Church as the day of the *Lord*. And throughout all subsequent ages, has not the *Lord* set his seal abundantly on the Christian Sabbath?

There is, then, ample proof that the day of rest is bound upon us by the law of God; that it is no less a clear duty, than it is an unspeakable privilege, to keep it holy. As such, the Spirit writes it on every renovated heart. The appeal may be made to the holiest of the saints. Has He not manifested himself on that day as on none beside? Has not great grace preëminently rested on its solemn assemblies? Has it not been the birthday of unnumbered souls? Has it not been a season of special refreshing and edifying to the flock of Christ? Is it not rich in holy memorials, gracious records, heavenly traditions? In every age and clime have not his children been all taught of God to prize and reverence his day? Have they not had the fourth commandment, as distinctly as the other commandments, written "on the fleshly tables of their heart"—so that spontaneously, not as of compulsion, but of taste and choice, they have "remembered the Sabbath-day to keep it holy?" Thus the Spirit in the heart has witnessed with the Spirit in the word, that the *obligation* of the ordinance *abides*, while the *blessedness* of the ordinance is *enhanced*.

Now, therefore, let us contemplate the spirit in which the man of business ought

to keep the day. He should keep it with a solemn reverence of mind. Whatever pertains immediately to God challenges honor and solemnity. Whatever he has inscribed with "holiness unto the Lord," must be sacred to us. And he has said, "Reverence my Sabbaths :" he teaches us to call them "honorable;" he "hallowed" the day which he set apart for himself. Far from us, therefore, be lightness and frivolity, secularity and distraction, carnal indulgence, or heartless indifference, on the day of God. Let it always shed upon our souls a soothing influence, a vivid sense of things unseen.

At the same time, the day which God blessed ought not to be a day of severity and gloom. They scarcely honor it more who observe it morosely and ascetically, than they do who turn it into an occasion of mirth and frivolity. We are told to call it "a delight." It is a festival to the Lord. We should put on "the garment of praise," not "the spirit of heaviness," when we hear the sweet chime of its bells. We should "enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise." The deepest joy is serious and chastened. We should be sober, yet be glad; and adorn the day with holy cheerfulness. Our servants, our

children, our friends, should see that we enjoy the ordinance; that it is congenial to our spirit; that it is to us a foretaste of the rest of heaven—a day we would like to have last forever. Never let us forget that if the brief Sabbath of earth be a weariness to us, how wearisome would that Sabbath be protracted to all eternity! Yet an everlasting Sabbath-keeping is one of the most beautiful and expressive conceptions which the Holy Ghost gives us of the ceaseless fruition of those who shall be accounted worthy to enter the kingdom of heaven.

The great thing is, to enter into the *spirit* of the day, not to rest in the cold *letter*. To refrain from secular occupations, to forego worldly pleasures, to abstain from vain conversation, to give special attention to the Bible, to be punctual and decorous in the services of the sanctuary—all this is well; but all this may be, and yet the day be unsanctified in His sight who searches the heart. The soul must be attuned to the day. The outward demeanor must be the reflection of the inward frame. The mind must be disencumbered of its burdens, disentangled from its cares, and, like the unchained eagle, set free to mount up into communion with God. This is the essence of the observ-

ance. This must give reality and life to all. Then will our Sabbaths be to us vestiges of paradise, green spots in our pilgrimage through the wilderness, where we will find our freshest springs, and where we will breathe an atmosphere cooled with the dews of heaven. Then will we wish to lengthen, not to abridge the hours. Then will we ask, not how much, but how little we can attend to things below on the day set apart for "things above." It is the lack of this sabbatic tone that leads so many, who name the name of Christ, to while away the day in listless trifling, or to weave excuses for encroaching on its precincts. By one, urgent business letters must be read, if not written, on the day; by another, impending sickness is staved off till the leisure day which can best be spared for nursing it; because they are *only spiritual* concerns that then demand attention; a third steals a few hours for journeying, because it is the genteel day on which to travel, and because, by setting out betimes, he can reach his destination soon enough to attend the evening service; or, having attended church in the forenoon at home, he can afterward so improve the time as to gain the point where he wishes to begin his business with the Monday's dawn

—thus, with wondrous dexterity, saving time, yet satisfying conscience! Are not these things so? Are not many carried away by conformity to the usages of the world in this matter—“by reason of whom the way of godliness is evil spoken of?” And are, then, the engagements of the holy day so insignificant? Can they be so lightly postponed to the calls of secular avocations? Is one-seventh of our time too much to devote exclusively to eternity? Are the interests and destinies of immortality subordinate to the gains and losses of threescore years and ten? Have we so learned Christ? so weighed the worth of the soul? so estimated the price with which it was bought?

Our influence with our servants and dependents must be used in support of the day of rest. Not only ought we to shrink from unnecessarily employing them either for our pleasure or our profit; not only ought we to secure to them full opportunity to enjoy the services of the sanctuary; but we ought to see to it that they avail themselves of the opportunity afforded. Sad will it be, should we give them occasion to infer that the holy day has no holiness for them; that for us it has its obligations and its duties, but that for them it has neither; that their toil is never

to be relaxed—their salvation never worked out. Strive to make it to them, as to yourselves, the brightest, the most refreshing day of the seven.

In order to sanctify the Sabbath, and arrest the current of secularity, which is all too apt to overflow the fences of the day, it is highly important that our mercantile men should have what the Jews of old had—“the preparation,” when the Sabbath draws on. Happy, therefore, will it be, if recent arrangements for suspending business at an early hour on the Saturday should enable the Christian merchant not only to close his counting-house betimes, but to abstract his mind from his speculations, his risks, and his responsibilities—lest haply, like the money-changers and sellers of doves in the temple, he should virtually, though not actually, make the house of God “a den of thieves.” Much depends on the attitude and readiness in which we await the day. We ought, as it is so graphically said in the book of Isaiah, to “turn away our foot” from the Sabbath—to halt on its confines, lest in our eager career we should overleap the divine barrier, and with our shoes still on our feet desecrate the sacred inclosure.

The man who is earnest in hallowing the

Sabbath himself, cannot fail to be zealous for its observance by his neighborhood and his nation. He cannot therefore but "sigh and cry for all the abominations" which defile the holy season in our own land; for the dissipation and profaneness which rush down our streets; for our open beer-houses; for our scenes of bacchanalian carousal and blasphemous diversion; for our pleasure gardens and musical saloons, alluring thousands of the young and heedless into the pitfalls of ruin which they conceal. And what shall be said of the gigantic profanations of the Sabbath which are not only sanctioned, but even required by the laws of the land? What of our postal regulations, enforcing, as they do, an almost unrelieved amount of toil on tens of thousands of our fellow-citizens? It is not that we want a law to compel the observance of the day. What we need is a law to restrain men in authority from forcing their dependents to violate the day. It is not that we can make men religious by authority of government; but we can, by legislative enactment, restrict employers from constraining those whom they employ to be irreligious. As it is, existing laws countenance, nay, in some instances, demand, the infringement of the divine law. By moral,

though not by physical force, multitudes are compelled to be Sabbath-breakers, or to suffer great disadvantages for conscience' sake. Over these things, every one who is jealous for the Lord God of hosts, and trembles for the land we live in, will deeply mourn ; and by his example, by his protest, by his influence, by his efforts, will do all that lieth in him to check the accumulation of national guilt in this matter ; threatening, as that guilt does, to bring down judgments on the nation. Let us never forget that the Sabbath is a token of the covenant of God with our country ; it is a rainbow round about our throne, which when bright and clear, witnesses that God will not suffer us to be overwhelmed ; but which, when dimmed and defaced by desecration, betokens impending disaster to the community.

But we may safely assure the man of business, that as surely as he enters into the spirit of the day, so surely shall he realize its blessings. The Lord "blessed" as well as "hallowed" the day : he not only set it apart for holy purposes, but annexed a special blessing to its observance. It is for our good. It is for our happiness. We love to view it in this light. Duty—authority—these are cold words to use in urging the

Christian to do what God bids him, and enjoy what God promises him. Rather would we speak to him of grace—of privilege—of blessedness. “The Sabbath was made for man.” It is the gift of love. It is the pledge of peace. It meets our wants; it suits our frame. True, it is a yoke, but that yoke is easy; a restraint, but that restraint is “perfect freedom.” Why did God separate one-seventh portion of human life from the pursuits of time? Why! but for the comfort, refreshment, and edification of man, in subservience to his own glory. Nor did “the High and Lofty One” think it beneath him, in like manner, to secure repose to the ox and the ass; the beasts that toil in our service. Even with a view to the physical constitution of man, the law of the Sabbath is a law of love. One of our most distinguished medical men, when examined by a committee of the House of Commons on the question of the Lord’s day, gave it as his testimony, based on large experience, that the man who does not rest one day in seven will, ordinarily, wear out his energies before the time, and bring upon himself premature decrepitude and death. He added—and it was an interesting addition—that medical science had arrived at the conclusion, that

the very portion of time fixed upon by his Creator, is that which man needs for repose. Upon its being observed to him that some of the ministers of religion take no day of rest, he replied that they could not stand incessant effort; and that, except they would secure an equivalent for the repose of the Sabbath, they must, sooner or later, fall victims to the unrelaxed strain on their energies. How benignly, therefore, has God made provision for the recruital of our physical nature! But it is when we contemplate the ordinance in its bearing on the well-being of the human spirit, that it rises upon our view in all its benignity. It is peculiarly the friend of fallen man; for if, amid the hallowed scenes of Eden, there was needed a day on which the sinless dressers of the garden should intermit their gentle toil, how much more urgently must blighted, guilty man, amid the temptations, and cares, and pollutions, and distractions to which he is now subjected, stand in need of one day in seven to give him opportunity to find and follow the ways of restoration to God, and holiness, and heaven! The first days of his weeks are steps in the mystic ladder up which he may climb till he reach the land where the sun of the Sabbath shall never set, and the wor-

ship of the Sabbath never close. Blot out that day—and you would well-nigh blot out the service of God from the face of the earth. Close all our sanctuaries—stop all our Sunday schools—withdraw all the influences of the day of rest—and what would be the consequences? How would earth's ills be envenomed—earth's woes embittered—earth's toils enhanced? To the Christian man of business the privation would be irreparable. His dearest reminiscences, his richest enjoyments, his brightest hopes, are all bound up with the Sabbath. How subservient is it to his soul's health! How conducive to his peace! How his salt would lose its savor if it were not impregnated afresh by the influence of the holy day!

Can we overrate the blessing of the observance to those of the faithful who are unavoidably harassed and strained from day to day by the overwrought machinery of modern trade? To them how unspeakable the relief of having the moving power stopped, the whole mechanism of traffic suspended, and being able to withdraw from the din and hurry, and distraction of the commercial world—exchanging them for the calm of the closet, the communion of the family, the avocations of mercy, and the soothing ser-

vices of the house of prayer ! The Sabbath is to such, as the green and watered oasis is to the worn and fevered traveler in the Arabian desert. The dew of the day abides upon their spirits. A Sabbath meetly sanctified, gives a tone to the days that follow. The week may be compared to a harp of seven strings: the first—the master cord—gives the key-note to the rest—let that be tuned by heaven, and the others will sound in consonance. You may forecast the character of the week from the way in which you begin it—from the tone of your spirit on the day of God. If you have been happy and heavenly, then much of happiness and heavenliness will ordinarily pervade your occupations; but if you were earthly and distracted then, still more of earthliness and distraction will cleave to you when you resume the tasks of life. On the Sabbath the lamp must be replenished with oil; on the Sabbath, the loins must be girt anew; on the Sabbath, “we buy wine and milk, without money and without price,” that we may be strengthened for our warfare and our journey! Blessed day! Symbol of grace, bond of fellowship, birthright of the poor, reflection of heaven, who would not love thee? who would not seek to taste thy sweet-

ness? Some, indeed, of our philosophizing Christians say disparagingly, that every day ought to be a Sabbath to the saint. And so it should be: but who is likeliest to sanctify every day? Is it not he who most remembers the Sabbath day to keep it holy? There are those who would bring down the hallowed day to the level of the days of labor, instead of striving to bring up the latter to the standard of the former—and to do so by making use of the former as a purchase for the purpose. He who knoweth our frame, knew what we had need of, when he ordained for us a day specially consecrated to the things that belong to our peace.

Let it be remembered that if we love best the day which God has hallowed, that love is to us a pledge and prelibation of heaven. Once in the porch of a church, at the close of the Sunday evening service, the minister found an aged woman still lingering after all her fellow-worshipers were gone, who, on his asking her why she did not hasten home as the night was fast approaching, answered, with pathetic earnestness and simplicity, “O, sir! I love to linger here: I was wishing that I never had to leave church, and that Sunday would last forever.” “Happy are you,” said he; “for you will soon

have your wish fulfilled in the enjoyment of a never-ending Sabbath, and of a temple from which the worshipers shall no more go out." The very God of grace and peace grant the reader to be like-minded with that simple saint!

Time would fail us to enlarge on the benign influence of a well-kept Sabbath on the community—on the nation at large. How it humanizes, how it harmonizes the people, bringing together the ranks of society, and soothing the asperities of secular intercourse. The different sections of our own country illustrate both the happy influences resulting from hallowing the Sabbath, and the evils of desecrating its holy time. See, also, how Scotland is distinguished for its observance of the day of rest, and how high the state of its morality, and how sound and prosperous its social condition! England, with all her faults, contrasts favorably in this respect with continental nations; so that the strangers who flocked from all countries to the Great Exhibition, were specially struck with the reverence for the Sabbath which characterizes the inhabitants of this land. They were filled with astonishment when they learned that the stupendous structure was raised, and furnished, and finished, without

the sound of a hammer having been heard, without a nail having been driven, on the holy day. Nor were they less astonished to find the doors of the Exhibition so strictly closed on the Sunday, that neither the peer, nor even the artist anxious to copy various objects in quietness, was suffered to enter on the Lord's day. Not by way of invidious comparison, but in thankfulness to God that there is yet so right a sentiment left among the people of our fatherland, we record these facts. Those who have traveled on the continent well know, that there is nothing shocks more the American or British tourist—if worthy of the name—than the manner in which the day of God is there profaned. Changed into a carnival of amusement, it seems more Satan's "*holiday*" than Christ's *holy* day; the theaters wide open, the ball-rooms thronged, the bazaars all alive, the military review or the political banquet furnishing popular excitement; these are the features of a continental Sunday. Shame on the American or the British traveler who yields to the current! he disgraces alike his national and his religious connections. We owe it to our Protestant principles and institutions, that there is so much homage still paid among us to the blessed ordinance. The

Romish Sabbath is half formal, half carnal —a forenoon of idolatry, ending in an afternoon of frivolity. And no marvel, when the “holiday” of the Church is held to be paramount to the *holy* day of the Lord of the Church. Let us not, however, “be high-minded, but fear.” Have we not had latterly fearful encroachments on the sanctity of the observance? Are not our unclosed taverns, and our thinly-vailed haunts of riot and revelry, on his day, crying to God against us? And are there not even now mighty efforts making to break down still more the fences of the day? If, therefore, we love our country, and the day which God has made so largely the channel of blessings to our country, we must hold fast the Protestant distinction of an unmutilated Sabbath, as well as of an unadulterated Bible, and an unsensualized ritual. Let lost ground be recovered. Let all the haunts of drunkenness and dissipation be closed on the holy day. Let the vagrant multitudes be won to the house of prayer. “Then God, even our own God, will give us his blessing.”

And now, to the younger readers of these pages who may be just launching on the sea of business, we would more particularly address the word of affectionate admonition. En-

grave it as an axiom on your minds, that to hold fast the Sabbath is to hold fast a sheet-anchor; while to abandon its observance, is to drift from your moorings. And whither may not the unmoored bark be driven? From the very gallows hundreds have pointed to the first broken Sabbath—when, for the first time, they turned their backs on the sanctuary and their faces toward the haunts of vanity—as the first open step down the declivity which has ended in the abyss of ruin. The sacred hours of God's holy day must be sacrificed neither to pleasure nor to business. To companions who would allure to this sin let the answer be—"We will not;" and to employers who would command it, "We cannot do this wickedness and sin against God." "One is our Master." We must keep his charge, and leave consequences in his hands. Let those in like circumstances imitate that man, who, when young, was required by his employer to transact business on the Lord's day; upon which he said—"I will come to your place of business at one o'clock on Monday morning, and work till twelve o'clock on Saturday night, but I cannot break the fourth commandment; if you insist upon my doing so, you must seek another servant, and I another

master." What was the consequence? He was dismissed, and to all appearance thrown out of bread. But what was the sequel? After having tried in vain to find a man less scrupulous—but no less punctual and trustworthy—than the one whom he had cashiered, his late employer sent for him again, raised his salary, and placed unlimited confidence in him. Since then that individual has thriven, and he now fills a public post of considerable importance and responsibility—thus furnishing one among the many exemplifications that might be given, that God honors those who honor him by honoring his day. The only appropriate labor on Sundays is the labor of love. As very many have little time to do aught expressly for God on other days, they ought to be all the more careful to do what they can on the sacred day to set forth his glory, and set forward his truth. What a noble opportunity for doing good is presented by our Sunday schools! There, in watering, we may be watered—in teaching, taught—in blessing, blessed. Let it be further remembered, that the work to which the Sabbath is sacred, is the one thing needful—salvation through Christ by the sprinkling of his blood, and the renewing of his Spirit. This is the

grand end of the Sabbath; this, the grand end of life. O that Christians would awake to the thrilling interest of the occasion, imprint the marks of holiness upon their holy days, that on their death-bed the ghosts of murdered Sabbaths may not haunt them with remorse, nor witness against them at the judgment seat; but solace the one with sweet remembrances, and witness before the other, that they received not the grace of God in vain. "So shall an entrance be ministered to us abundantly into the rest that remaineth to the people of God."

CHAPTER XIV.

HIS HOPE WHEN HE HAD DONE ALL.

THE bird which soars the highest, builds the lowest nest. Who is there that loves the green fields in the vernal season, but must have watched with interest the joyous lark? Her nest is down in the grass, while her flight is up in the sky. Now she is hidden in the brightness of the sunbeams, and can be traced only by the gushing music she pours from on high—now she drops down again, fleet as the flight of an arrow, into her own secret home on the earth. How apt an emblem of him who is taught effectually by the Spirit of God! The more he is lifted up in communion with heaven, the deeper is his abasement in his own eyes. The more he is enriched with the treasures of grace, the more he abounds in the fruits of holiness—the more will he disclaim all merit of his own, and prostrate himself at the foot of the cross. You may have marked the ears of barley how they grow. When they first appear, and while their grain is light, they lift their heads toward the sky; but as

they fill with corn, they bend toward the dust; and the heavier their freight, the nearer they stoop to the ground. Even so with "the children of the kingdom;" the holiest are the humblest, those who bear most fruit have least "confidence in the flesh." It was so with the great apostle of the Gentiles. In his earliest stage of faith, he styled himself "not worthy to be called an apostle." In riper maturity of grace, he described himself as "less than the least of all saints." But when he had become such a one as Paul the aged, and was not a whit behind the very chiefest of the apostles—when he had "fought a good fight, and finished his course, and kept the faith"—he spake of himself in yet lowlier style, saying—"Of sinners I am chief." Thus, as he ascended in holiness he descended in humility; the more he was honored of God, the more he abased himself.

Whenever we become acquainted with a person distinguished by other graces of the Spirit, we should be sorely disappointed, did we not find him adorned with this crowning virtue; a grace of which Augustine said, when he was asked, "What is the first thing in religion?"—"humility." "What the second?"—"humility." "What the

third?"—"humility." A deep humiliation on account of the flesh is wholly consistent with joyful consciousness of the work of the Spirit, in the divine life. Not to recognize and acknowledge the Spirit's work in the soul which he is sanctifying, is to grieve the Holy Spirit of God whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption; and is only less blind than for the saint to arrogate to himself what he owes to the Comforter. In proportion to the progress of renewal, will be the progress of spiritual sensibility and discernment in the soul; and in proportion as these are matured will be the perception, as of the old man that still hinders and harasses the new man, so also of the new man which is winning the victory over the flesh. The same apostle that said, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acception, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief;" said also, "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to youward." The two sentiments perfectly harmonized in his breast. He knew that in him (that is, in his flesh,) dwelt no good

thing; and yet he was equally assured, that by grace he was what he was, and that the grace given to him had not been in vain.

It would indeed imply a fatal flaw in the texture of a character—one which would mar the soundness and beauty of the whole—to be wanting in that fundamental grace—an humble, penitential reliance on the mercy of God. To delineate this distinctive trait of the righteous, in order that it may be coveted and copied, is the purpose of this chapter; and that will fitly finish the model which has been here presented for imitation.

Pride is the parent sin in the universe—it kindled rebellion in heaven; pride is the parent sin in the world—it introduced disobedience into Paradise. Angels fell because they “kept not their first estate.” Man fell because he desired to be “as God, knowing good and evil.” Adam fell, and in him fell the human race. As man fell through pride, he must rise through humility. As he fell by seeking to be as a god, he must rise by learning that he is “a worm, and no man.” As he lost his crown by being unwilling to wear it in dependency on his Creator, he regains it by becoming lowly enough to welcome it as altogether the gift of sovereign

grace. One of the chief barriers between man and salvation is the pride of his heart—the fond conceit of his own goodness. However utterly apostate from God, however sinning in everything he does, because in everything coming short of the glory of God—such is the blindness and infatuation of his heart, that he is still bent on saving himself; he would fain pass *by* the cross on the way to the crown. Almost invariably, whenever men begin to feel any anxiety about their future destiny—whether on a sick-bed, or in sorrow, or when disquieted by conscience—they set to work to be their own saviours. Each has his own scheme for making his peace with God—but whether by repentance, or by amendment, or by restitution—self is the hinge of all. Man must be driven off these foundations of sand; hunted out of all his “refuges of lies;” reduced to a sense of helpless, hopeless, moral bankruptcy; convinced that he cannot so much as think a thought, conceive a motive, or do an act, acceptable to God, till he is in Christ, till he is justified freely through the merits of Christ, and quickened effectually by the spirit of Christ—before he can be constrained to fly for refuge to lay hold upon the hope—the only hope set before a

sinner. Then, and not till then, will he stoop low enough to enter in at the strait gate, and become meek enough to travel the narrow way. The beginning of wisdom with him is, therefore, to awake to the consciousness that he is spiritually dead, and that the sentence of eternal death is recorded against him. For apart from Christ —however beautiful his morality, however bright his honor, however unblemished his reputation—though he may be the idol of his circle, and though men may point him out as a pattern of mercantile probity;—yet must he appear in the sight of God as an unreconciled rebel. The Pharisee who prayed, “God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are” (and whose professions are not denied) returned from the temple unforgiven; while the publican, who, bowed down with a sense of his sin, durst not so much as lift up his eyes unto heaven, but smote on his breast, saying, “God be merciful unto me a sinner,” this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; “for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased, but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” Here is the key to acceptance with God. From the depth of despair breaks the dawn of hope. Despair

of self heralds hope in Jesus. The abandonment of our own righteousness, prepares us for the reception of "the Lord our righteousness." So long as the wrecked sinner trusts to rafts of his own construction, or clings to fragments of the wreck, he can find no rest nor safety; but when loosing his hold of all beside, he grasps the cable stretched out to him by sovereign mercy; or, to change the figure, when he is "apprehended of Christ," and lifted into the life-boat—the ark of salvation—then he may look back on his peril with calmness, and round on the boisterous bilows with peace. One so rescued will never fail to own, "I did not make the ark myself—neither did I find it—neither did I enter it, of myself: Jesus provided it; he brought it nigh to me; he delivered me out of the deep waters. He laid hold upon me, as he did on Peter when sinking, and "put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto my God." "By the grace of God I am what I am." "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Be assured, that the more holy a man's spirit becomes, the more sensitive will it become; and the more sensitive his spirit, the

deeper and livelier will be his sense of sinfulness. Shut up an individual in a dark apartment, hung round with cobwebs, and defiled with dust, and he will be insensible to its condition; then admit a little light, and he will begin to suspect its state; admit more and more, and the clearer the light, the more clearly will he discern the impurities which were hidden before; yea, though a process of purification may be going on the while, it will seem to him as if the room looked only the more repulsive: not that its defilements are undiminished, but that the light which reveals them is stronger. So when "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in the heart" of a sinner, the light imparted makes manifest to him at once the dark secrets of his history, and he discovers in his inner parts things never suspected before; and still, as "the shining light shines more and more," it will disclose to him trespasses more multitudinous, and recesses more black; yet not to drive him to despair, but to shut him up to Christ. Thus it was with Paul: he was "alive without the law once;" conviction came, and all his fond hopes and confidences were slain; but then, out of self-despair, sprang living hope. Dropping

his hold of the rope of sand, he clung to the sheet-anchor, "which entereth into that within the vail." Hearken to his own glowing words, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Thus, when the specious structure which he had raised with so much toil and regarded with so much complacency, was smitten by the hammer of the law, and shivered into atoms, it was that he might be driven to hide and dwell beneath the shadow of the great rock in the weary land.

The world cannot understand the paradox—that the *saint* should loathe and condemn himself, as the *sinner* never loathes and condemns *himself*. They suspect that he must be either a fanatic or a deceiver. They know not how the stars of nature's night fade away before the revelation of the Sun of Righteousness. Until sanctified wholly,

the more we discern his purity, the more must we discern our own impurity; the more we behold his majesty, the more must we perceive our vileness. See how it was with the patriarch Job: chafed by contradiction, shattered by calamities, and writhing under a weight of unjust accusation, he for a season spake unadvisedly with his lips; but mark the effect of the display of the power and greatness of God upon his mind. He said, "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Yet Job was not less holy when he thus spake, than when he affirmed his blamelessness, and contended against every charge alleged against him? Rather, he was more thoroughly refined in the furnace. The depth of his humility was the gauge of his grace: and the more he abhorred himself in the presence of God, the more God delighted in his servant. For "to this man will I look, saith the Lord, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." The lowliest soul is the dearest to God. The man who has most absolutely abandoned all but

Christ, is the wisest, the safest, and the happiest of men. He is nearest to the spirit of heaven, where the palm and the crown are cast before the throne of the Lamb, and the song of the ransomed which ceaselessly sounds is, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us by thy blood to God, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests." These are they "that have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." No less overpowering was the effect of the vision of the Almighty on the spirit of Isaiah the prophet, when he "saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim;—and one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke." Then said the prophet, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." Thus was he driven to despair by the terribleness of the majesty of the God of heaven. But he was laid low that he might be exalted. "Then

flew one of the seraphim unto him, having in his hand a live coal taken from off the altar, which he had taken with the emblem of the atoning sacrifice, that cleanseth from sin : and he laid it upon his mouth, and said, Lo ! this hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." Thus strengthened—filled at once with humility and confidence—no sooner did he hear the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send ? and who will go for us ?" then he said, "Here am I, send me." He was now ready for reproach—or danger—or death, in fulfilling the commission of God.

In like manner, when Jesus gave Peter a glimpse of his divine glory in the miraculous draught of fishes at the sea of Galilee, the apostle, overwhelmed with the consciousness of his guilt as seen in that light, fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." The effulgence which flashed upon him, laid open to him the dark recesses of his heart, as the gleam of lightning discovers the depths of the forest. How interesting and instructive thus to trace the uniformity of effect produced by the self-knowledge which springs from the knowledge of God ! As it was with the holy men of old, so has it been

with the holiest and best in after times. The most eminent of them—"the noble army of martyrs"—have been the most distinguished for their lowliness. "There," used the martyr Bradford to say, when he saw a criminal led to the scaffold, "there, but for the grace of God, goes John Bradford."

All that is holy in the believer is of the Spirit; all that is corrupt in him is of the flesh. Hence it is, that last as well as first he glories in Christ Jesus, and has no confidence in the flesh; hence it is, that he looks for the *mercy* of our Lord Jesus Christ, even unto eternal life; hence it is, that when he plants his footsteps on the threshold of heaven, he clings the most absolutely to the mercy of God in Christ. Yes, it is then that all who are taught of God arrive at *one point*. We have heard of the death-bed scenes of many of the righteous, and with thrilling interest have considered their experience in that most solemn and most searching hour; and we have found that all, whether babes or fathers in Christ, have alike hung only on the hope of the cross; while the holiest have ever been the humblest in that last struggle. The language of that beautiful hymn, in which confidence and humility are so admirably united, best expresses the one sen-

timent of their hearts as it throbs, and flutters, and ceases to beat:—

“In my hand no price I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling.”

Yes, however aforetime some of them may have been tempted to look upon themselves with complacency, or to attach importance to their doings or their observances, in that decisive moment, all vanishes from their view but the saving grace of their Saviour. Neither privileges, nor sacraments, nor oblations, nor praise of men, nor ecclesiastical distinctions, nor arm of priest or pastor, shares their reliance; but “CHRIST IS ALL AND IN ALL.” Every other anchor drags, every other cable snaps, before the pressure of the tide that sweeps the soul into eternity. One, and only one hope retains its imperishable moorings—it is the hope set before us in Jesus. This can enable the expiring saint to exclaim, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Let us then hear the conclusion of the whole matter. The Christian should abound in all good works; he should be fruitful in everything that adorns the doctrine of God his Saviour; an ensample of them that be-

lieve; doing to others as he would that others should do unto him. He must confess his Master's name, and be jealous of his honor; and yet after all, and when he has done all, he abandons all as supplying the slightest foundation of confidence; and with the apostle still protests, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of Jesus Christ." He begins with mercy, continues in mercy, and closes with mercy. To pride ourselves in our works is to mar all. The fly is introduced into the ointment which will make it unsavory.

We have thus set before the reader a rough outline of a character to be copied, one every way worthy of his study and imitation. It is not the character of a divine or a recluse; but of one whose occupation is in the midst of the world, of one who has to encounter difficulties, overcome temptations, sustain cares and endure trials, such as are common to men engaged in the active duties of life. Let it be his ambition to realize that character in himself. Let Christian men of business know their calls to shine as lights in their several spheres in the great mercantile world. It is theirs to irradiate with holiness each one his own peculiar scene of action, whether it be the counting-

house or the manufactory, the work-shop or the ware-house. To them the Church must look to furnish to the world a living demonstration that faith establishes the law ; that they who repudiate all confidence in works are the most careful to maintain them. Thus shall they compel those who denounce the principles of professed Christians to admire their practice, and “with well doing put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.” The truly evangelical work as though all depended on their working, and yet they trust as knowing that all depends on the aids of divine grace. As his first prayer was “God be merciful to me a sinner, so will the spirit of his last prayer be the same. At the cross he begins and at the cross he closes his race. In his utmost attainments his sole confidence is still, that great as may be his sins, the mercies and merits of Christ are infinitely greater ; and crimson as may be his guilt, his blood washes it white as snow. “Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might ; let not the rich man glory in his riches ; but he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”

THE END.

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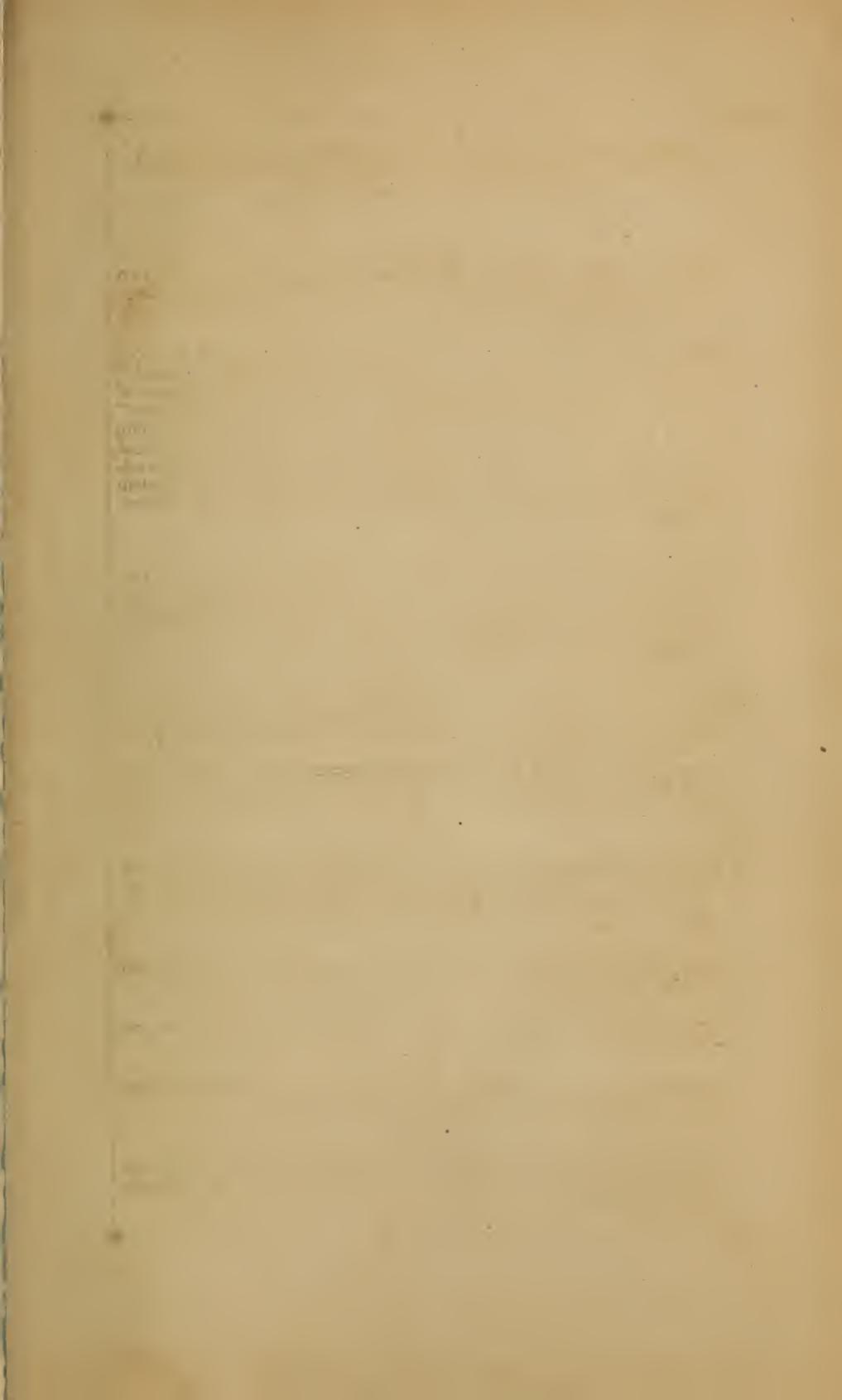
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